

PERSONAL

The announcement a few weeks ago that some committee or other was forecasting the eventual redundancy of teachers because of the development of the micro-computer made me feel about as comfortable as a cat in a hat.

Teachers were written off at the advent of television, language laboratories, programmed learning, the film projector, radio, and, no doubt, by the first exponents of cave painting.

Each new audio-visual development has in practice merely underlined the need for a sensitive teacher to make it effective. In every case the new wonder machine has eventually taken its place as part of the repertoire of skilful teachers rather than a replacement for them.

My first introduction to audio-visual teaching was in my secondary school geography lessons. The pride and joy of my unfavourable teacher, a man whose flat vowels made the station announcer's endless taped command to stand clear of the doors sound positively exciting, was a huge episcopate. It looked like some medieval torture instrument, and it had probably bought it at a knockdown price from Torquemada in surplus to Spanish Inquisition requirements.

Geography lessons were punctuated by the projection, in a pitch dark

room, of faint pictures from ancient textbooks showing Bolton during a monsoon, or Bengali workers mining jute. All I remember now is the gigantic machine, and the fantasies we had that miscreants might one day be squashed flat under it and projected on the screen to the end of time as an awful example to the rest.

It is a well-known professional hazard among those who sell audio-visual aids that not only will every breakdown in the handbook occur during the actual demonstration, but that there will be at least one novel variant which has never been witnessed before.

The first time I ever showed a group of trainee teachers how to use a language laboratory, the most nervous student in the bunch was actually attacked by one of the booties. Language laboratories, you will recall, were places where junior psychopaths could make lion noises into their microphone, or switch headsets with their neighbour, thus giving the teacher a nervous breakdown when the pupil in booth eight replied to his question instead of one in booth nine.

We had to sedate this especially apprehensive student teacher even to get her into the phoe. Part way through the demonstration I asked the



Ted Wragg

whole group to rewind their tapes. For some inexplicable reason the tape on her particular recorder caught on a first revolving spindle and proceeded to kink all over the tape deck like a trendy hair style. This fulfilled her worst nightmare and she fled never to return. She was just hugging a stick of chalk for security.

Another tipsy-tapped user of audio-visual equipment frequently pass on to

the uninitiated is the need for a Plan B. Since in my experience the wretched junk will invariably blow at least one gasket on you, I have had to become one of the world's leading stockists of Plan B. Essential components of Plan B involve more than a stick of chalk, a loud voice and stark dry-lipped terror.

My own greatest challenge occurred a couple of years ago when I was teaching media studies to a class of 12-year-olds. I had lovingly edited together a video cassette of extracts from news, current affairs and light entertainment programmes, as well as a series of television commercials for the class to analyse, when the idiot machine refused abjectly to disgorge either sound or vision. If you have ever spent an hour miming Angela Ripston, Terry Wogan, Robin Day, the Green Cross Code Man and the Honey Monster through clenched teeth, you will know exactly how I felt.

Like many children raised in post-war Britain I never had a toy train, so my chief motivation for getting hold of new audio-visual technology is to compensate for this major piece of childhood deprivation. What offends my permanent and indelible sense of post-war austerity, however, is the speed with which these new electronic toys become obsolete.

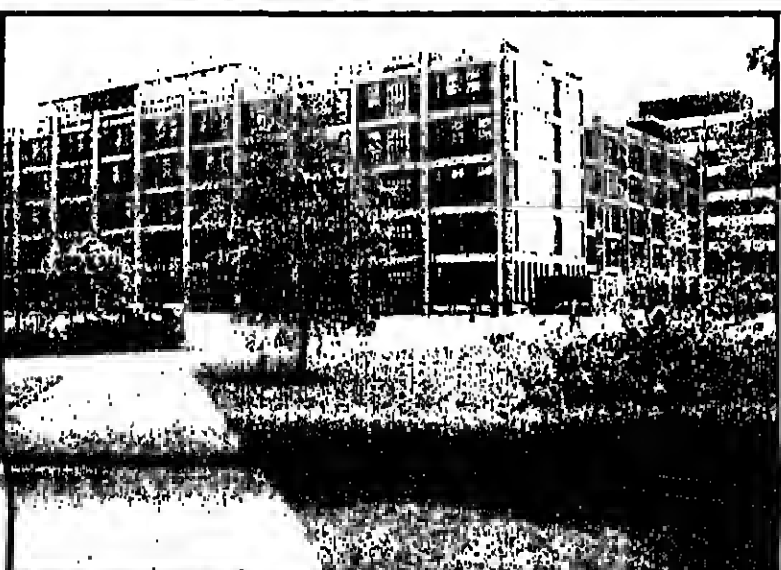
On the television front no sooner had I got used to the huge video-recorders of the late 1960s, the sort that were about as portable as Tower Bridge and came supplied with a free National Health Service truss, than half-inch black-and-white portable machines appeared. These were followed by crude cassette machines, and most recently by several different formats of sophisticated colour cassette recorder. Rumour has it that the Japanese are exacting belated revenge for all the lousy battleship plans we sold them in the 1930s. Even so 12,000 primary schools and 99 per cent of secondary schools now own a video cassette recorder.

There is one feature of microcomputers, however, that seriously threatens the teacher's position. First the good news. Last week saw the opening of the first British factory fully equipped to melt down old micros to extract all the precious metals which can then be used to build new micros. No doubt some entrepreneurial genius will find a way of using Department of Industry equal funding money to buy micros, melt them down, and then "fence" them at a nearby school. Now the bad news. Swinshire will shortly upon the first British factory fully equipped to melt down and recycle old teachers.

DIARY

Hybrids in the land of red roses

A Lancastrian pilgrimage to Gawthorpe Hall, Burnley, which manages to combine being a National Trust property, a piece of Britain's original tertiary college (Nelson and Colne David Moore, 1901) and a small



Manchester's humanities building: an architectural horror

Nelson and Colne College, the pioneer of "Open College" access courses to higher education, which are now rapidly spreading throughout Lancashire and the rest of Britain; apart from its tertiary role for 16 to 19-year-olds (it even boasts a Millfield reject among them), Nelson and Colne and the other Lancashire Colleges now have 2,000 adults on these courses, together with over 400 volunteers

orthodox A level 18-year-olds. I find myself there for a meeting in one of the most inappropriately described educational edifices in the land - its "humanities" building. An inhuman architectural horror, it is part of a characterless campus which tore the heart out of the inner city when it was built in the 1960s. "The University As Urban Vandal" was how one article described it and it was right.

I finally run to ground 50 or so heads, deputies and administrators on a DES course, and we talk about about tertiary and sixth-form colleges in Lancashire.

I had always fondly imagined that some sort of organic unity might come to the tertiary sector because of its inextricable connection between sixth-form and tertiary education colleges. I was rudely disabused. In Lancashire, I was told, it's all naked competition and they seem to like it that way.

In fact it's more complicated than that, because they have a number of Catholic sixth-form colleges. Indeed it was clear that if the 1944 Act had allowed it, they'd have Catholic tertiary colleges also. I hope it never does; the lack of provision for sectarian further education was no doubt an accident in 1944; but it was a bumpy accident which has made some colleges in Belfast, Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool unique meeting places where Catholic and Protestant youngsters can mix for the first time at the age of 16. We need to keep it that way.

per day for bus fares). Though I realize that some Bromley Council officials live it up at Christmas and may be slightly impoverished in its wake, they may consider these rates somewhat below them.

Then again, the original (at any rate purported) objection to using local teachers, was a spate of previous allegations that one or two of them had been cheating (never, I repeat, substantiated) and favouring their own children; I would have thought that this objection applied *a fortiori* to a random bunch of council officials.

Finally, it's not yet clear what the Bromley teachers think of the system; they're neither as militant nor as affluent as their trade union colleagues in the NGA and I'm sure we're not going to see mass pickets at Bromley's seven 11-plus centres next term, but they must have some views on the propriety of unskilled operatives marking their own tests.

Indeed, if I were a Bromley parent I might have reservations about this method of egg-stamping my child at the tender age of 11. Time is now being taken to place on Saturday, January 14, and over 800 contestants are expected to enter for this race in which less than one in ten will pass the winning post.

It might just one day dawn, even on the Neanderthal burghers of Bromley who dream up this contest, that it would now be both cheaper and simpler to scrap it and get down to a bit of education.

Christopher Price

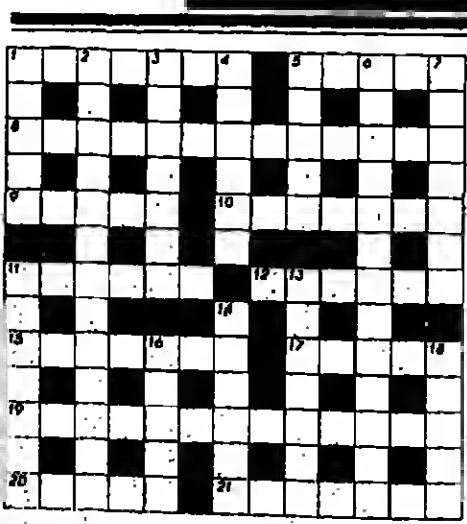
Snookering the MoD

To the magnificent arena of the Guildhall, Preston, which Alex Higgins and Steve Davis have kindly vacated just in time for me to congratulate 300-odd successful graduates of Preston Polytechnic.

Preston is not quite so depressed as other parts of the county, and a remarkable number of those with tolerable degrees seem to have found jobs - not infrequently with local industries like British Aerospace and British Nuclear Fuels. So, having congratulated the parents on their children's success and getting the house to themselves at last, I warn the offspring of the dangerous monopoly of employment and research currently being assembled by the Ministry of Defence and kindred secretive government departments.

I advise them that though they will have signed the Official Secrets Act on their first day at work, they should place a rather higher priority on their duties towards the cleanliness of the radiation of Lancashire beaches and indeed to the peace of the world generally. They need knowingly, and I feel I may have created a few cruel moles in the system to make a major Windscale disaster just a little less likely.

No 131 CROSSWORD by Rufus



Down

- 1 Export to give way under pressure (5)
- 2 A no longer to be fought for (8,5)
- 3 Expulsion got up in trouble (7)
- 4 Available impudence in a secret agent (6)
- 5 Ocean-designed craft? Hardly (5)
- 6 Great ambition of the pyromaniac? (7,6)
- 7 Never seeming to get older or younger? (1)
- 8 Nero sprawled on his couch in a toga? (7)
- 9 His arrival will give his parents little pride (4,3)
- 10 He should honour his agreement to the letter (7)
- 11 Dirty point on a pen (5)
- 12 In a way, use of sound protection (5)

Across

- 1 Singular-looking giant? (7)
- 2 Fabled killer (5)
- 3 Release after a confession without a charge (9,4)
- 4 Colour uniformly used (5)
- 5 Exact point covered by the summary (7)
- 6 To occupy one's self, go into battle (6)
- 7 Mixes up a signal and gets into a row (6)
- 8 An account that has been overdrawn? (7)
- 9 Work-time entertainment (5)
- 10 A grave charge? (4,9)
- 11 Does it make child's play of washday chores? (7)
- 12 They may commemorate different battles (7)

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Tory councils threaten to withdraw from YTS

Mark Jackson

Hard-pressed Tory councils have given the Government ultimatum over the funding of the Youth Training Scheme. They say they must reduce their losses - even if it means backing out of the scheme.

Such a move would make it virtually impossible to maintain the scheme as an integrated year of foundation training for all of the 460,000 youngsters expected next year because the colleges are needed to provide the off-the-job training and further education for many of them.

And it would threaten large scale redundancy among college staff, many of whom have been taken on for the YTS courses, or redeployed from traditional work which no longer exists.

The threat of withdrawal is implied in the letter to the Youth Training Board from Mr Philip Merridale, education chairman of the Association of County Councils. It is intended to set the stage for the crucial negotiations with the Confederation of British Industries and the Manpower Services Commission over the level of fees to be paid by employers for YTS off-the-job training.

The letter points out that many authorities cannot subsidize the scheme without incurring severe grant penalties under the rate support grant fund. And it warns that unless they can substantially reduce the loss they are at present making on Mode A provision (the arrangement under which employers pay colleges for the training out of the grant they get from the Government) they will have to act.

Mr Merridale says: "They may consider either making substantial charges

for employed youngsters on day and block release courses, or meet the provision only where they would substantially cover their costs.

In effect, this second option would mean participating selectively or withdrawing."

He explains that the authorities were ready to take risks in order to support the scheme this year, and that they are now facing losses, not because of bad planning, but because the MSC went wrong in its assumptions. The authorities agreed to provide the off-the-job training to employers at below the real cost because they were told wrongly that the YTS would relieve them of much of the cost of subsidizing day and block release courses for apprentices and other young workers.

The Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities is taking a less aggressive line because many Labour cities accept that, however unfair the current situation, they cannot contemplate abandoning the unemployed school leavers in the YTS.

Thirty unemployed school-leavers in Dudley, West Midlands, are likely to be reported to the Department of Health and Social Security, which will consider docking their supplementary benefit for refusing to join the Youth Training Scheme. They are the first batch out of some 200 youngsters who failed to respond to repeated attempts to get them in contact with the office. Dudley is believed to be the first council department to act under new regulations which require officers to report youngsters in this way.



Seasonal harmony from Mrs Judith Watson, music head at Wilson Marriage School, Colchester, and members of the school choir during a Festival of Carols and Readings held at the University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, to be broadcast by two local radio stations on Christmas morning.

'Rayner' likely for universities

by Ngalo Crequer

Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, has asked vice chancellors to consider a Rayner-type inquiry into the efficiency of the universities.

Sir Keith raised the matter at last week's private talks with representatives from the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. The CVCP discussed the issue at its main meeting last Friday, and "initial" talks have already been held between their officials and Sir Peter Swanton-Dyer, chairman of the University Grants Committee, and senior staff.

The concern to improve the efficiency of the universities is understood to have come from the Prime Minister's office initially, and the CVCP is taking the matter very seriously.

Vice chancellors have made it clear to the UGC that their response to the Department of Education and Science will depend on what kind of inquiry would take place.

They would not object to an inquiry into matters of routine purchasing of goods and equipment, support services, and general administration.

So the review of the Research Council support services set up on Rayner lines last October, and which reported in September, would be an

acceptable model. That inquiry reported that savings of more than £3 million a year, and over 200 jobs could be made. It also suggested selling off surplus property.

But vice chancellors would not acquiesce in any review that sought to assess academic staff performance or the quality of research.

They would argue, and would be supported by the UGC, that the UGC does that job anyway, and it would be improper for an outside group to interfere.

The UGC is also likely to tell the DES that the cuts of the last few years have meant squeezes in all these areas and that more savings would be difficult to find. Conversely, the universities would have nothing to fear from such an inquiry.

But being canvassed is the idea of a specialist educational consultancy which would review services and management, aided by UGC officials.

The universities already undertake their own reviews. Some £400 million a year is spent on equipment and the Committee on University Purchasing has made savings worth millions of pounds. - *THE S*

US 'source of violence'

by Nick Wood

A head of English at a comprehensive school has described how he teaches children that the United States of America is the source of violence, injustice and oppression in the world.

Youngsters learn that there are two kinds of violence - American violence in support of "tyrannical regimes", which is "bestial and inhuman", and "revolutionary" violence, which is "righteous and just".

Mr Chris Searle, aged 39, who is head of English at Danford, a comprehensive for 800 boys in Bethnal Green, London, says his lessons are intended to make children challenge the "imperialist and military strangulation" that the US exerts on the world and to press for an end to US "military occupation" of Britain.

He gives a list of books and poems for children that he uses to show up the "contradictions between fascist violence... and the righteousness of revolutionary violence against fascist or imperialist tyranny".

Mr Searle says that the starting point for such lessons is the "struggle" now being waged in El Salvador and other Third World countries.

"As we enter into that kind of struggle with knowledge and consciousness, we are indisputably talking about the source of imperialism in the world, the United States of America. I don't think we can emphasize this forcefully enough. As soon as we look at what the USA is doing in El Salvador and we make the links, then our children will begin to realize what the USA is doing in the Middle East through Israel; what the USA is doing in Southern Africa through South Africa."

Mr Searle, who visited Grenada under the revolutionary leadership of Mr Maurice Bishop and helped to form its education policy, writes in the latest issue of the magazine, *Teaching London Kids*.

In 1971 while a probationary teacher at St John Coss school in Stepney, he was dismissed for publishing pupils' poems without the permission of the governors. Some of the poems appeared in the *Spat* newspaper.

Anglican admits evasion of RE law

by Bert Lodge

Thoughts on the advice he had given concerning morning assemblies. This recommendation avoiding hymns like "Onward Christian Soldiers" and commands like "Let us pray." No specific commitment is assumed of either pupil or teacher.

Mr Donald Moore, Tory education spokesman on the Labour-controlled council, said a letter sent last month to Mr Gordon Halsworth, chief education officer, inquiring about RE in Manchester, was "one of the strongest I have seen from the DES. It points out that the RE syllabus for Manchester

schools was agreed in 1957 and has not since been revised. So it is still valid."

The readiness to accommodate other faiths had been taken too far, Mr Moore thought. Minority groups had their own assemblies and he had no objection. "But we shall finish up with a totally humanistic approach. I can't see what is offensive about a hymn, a reading and a prayer. But when guidelines are issued at this level like schools tend to fall into line."

The 1944 Act requires RE to be on the syllabus and the school day to begin with an act of worship.



Bill Stubbs (left) and Edwin Kerr

Soapy saga

Last week, I promised a glimpse of the North London "Polytechnic's Darling" and Caroline Cox will be pleased to know that she's been written out of it for this week.

A brief recap. The CNAAs say the applied social studies and sociology courses are fine; the IBTs, led by one, Le Goulouid, say they're not; tense meetings take place and stalemate sets in.

Enter Dr Edwin Kerr, CNAAs boss and donor, Ulsterman of unshakeable integrity. A message comes forth to ILGA from Dr Kerr, implying that well, perhaps the course may not be all that wonderful after all, and perhaps they should have a meeting.

Has Kerr been got up? If so, by whom? How will he fare, facing the equally dour Scot, Stubbs of ILGA? Read all about it after Christmas.

THIS WEEK

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Pensions below

Teachers may have to pay higher pension contributions

Race Inquiry

An inquiry into racial attacks and recruitment to the National Front in schools has been launched in Bradford.

Committee line-up

The new membership of the Parliamentary Select Committee on education includes Clement Freud (pictured).



Platform

Nigel Richardson notes many similarities between today's education issues and those reported in the pages of *The TES* 50 years ago.

Jingo bells

Eric Midwinter looks back on bleak wartime Christmases when even the remotest school treadmill of sums and spelling seemed preferable to the

Arts/Books

Other times, other places: Victoria Neumann on some recent anthropology books; Brian Morton on Amos Oz; Frances Spalding on John Piper; Martin Fagg on the Tolstoy; articles and book reviews on pastoral care; children's paperbacks. The critic: John

Resources/Media

Liz Heron goes on a tour of Christmas exhibitions around the country; David MacKay writes about the thinking behind *Radio Thin King* and Carolyn O'Grady previews animated films of *Silas Marner* and *The Wind in the Willows*. 26,27



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Beware of imitations

"Tell me, Fortescue, who is this elap Sir Humphrey, anyway?"

"Oh him, Secretary of State. You've been reading *The Sunday Times*. I think he is part of what you might call a situation comedy situation."

"And this fellow Bernard? He seems to be some sort of private secretary. You haven't been replaced behind my back, have you, Fortescue?"

"No, sir, certainly not, sir."

"What does our permanent secretary think of all this, Fortescue?"

"Of course, he is very licensed, sir. He is no admirer of Sir Humphrey - thinks he lacks subtlety."

"I should think so. I certainly expect a higher standard of manipulation from you and your colleagues. It is no bad thing, though, if the public is led to believe you are all manipulating me, while I use the Department to manipulate the media and the pressure groups..."

"Quite true, Secretary of State. Any logs we roll are rolled for you alone..."

"How touching, Fortescue. But keep quiet about it, please."

"Certainly, Secretary of State. Discretion is the name of the game. That's why we deplore this elap Sir Humphrey and the awful Bernard..."

"Enough of this; what last minute goodies have you got for me before the mince pies?"

"Just the usual crop of minor decisions to clear out of the way before the Christmas break. This is an order for the closure of 100 schools in Northumberland..."

"Just remind me, Fortescue. Has all the drill been carried out?"

"Yes, sir. All the necessary arrangements have been made. The schools have been notified, counted, weighed, dis-

counted, rejected and generally processed in accordance with all the approved procedures..."

"How very thorough..."

"Moreover, the appropriate measures have been taken to prepare the ground. Letters to MPs, guidance for the local press, visits from HMI, OBEs for headmistresses, BEMs for school keepers, Palace Garden Parties for the bishops..."

"Admirable, Fortescue. And I see we are now going to release the news at a time when it will make minimum impact..."

"That, of course, is pure chance, Secretary of State... printing delays... the parliamentary calendar..."

"Of course, Fortescue, quite so, say no more, What's next?"

"This may be a little sensitive, sir. You have decided to shut down the Scunthorpe Polytechnic and sell the site for development as a holiday camp..."

"Now you mention it... Do I know anybody who ever went to Scunthorpe Polytechnic?"

"No, sir. But there are some constituency protests forwarded by some of your own backbenchers. And Mr Stuart Sexton..."

"He might have been there..."

"No sir, he's not an alumnus, but he has been doing some spade work at the grass roots..."

"Ah, Fortescue... where should we be without these horticultural metaphors. So appropriate for Lincolnshire..."

"We've taken the usual precautions, sir. It has been widely reported that nine polytechnics north of Trent are to close and their students be transferred to OYTS. Other schools are to be made redundant and transferred to the colonies. When they find out that Scunthorpe Poly is

the only victim, there'll be dancing in the streets..."

"You understand, of course, that I know nothing of these squalid manoeuvres, and, indeed, it would be as well to let it be known that M15 has been called in to find the source of these leaks..."

"Certainly, sir... as a matter of fact if we have anything really important to leak, we always tell M15."

"I don't follow you, Fortescue..."

"No matter, sir. Just one or two more oddments. A few MPs have put down PQs which need written answers."

"What are they?"

"Nothing important. The first wants to know how you are going to defend the quality of education after rate-capping. The second asks how on earth London education is expected to bear up under a joint board. The third is about the supply of books and equipment for primary and secondary schools, and the last one concerns the pupil-teacher ratio in Bedfordshire..."

"Let's take them one at a time, Fortescue..."

"I don't think that will be necessary. The suggested answer is the same in each case: 'This question should be directed to the Secretary of State for the Environment'."

"I wonder, Fortescue, is that wise? I think we should fudge it a bit. As you clearly understand, it is my philosophical objective to work the DES out of a job. I suppose I cannot complain if this aim is shared by my more thrusting colleagues in other departments, but I don't see why we should make it easy for them. Tell Sir Humphrey - sorry, tell the permanent secretary to wrap it all up in a nice White Paper..."

"Happy Christmas, Fortescue."

"Happy Christmas, Fortescue."

"Happy Christmas, Fortescue."

"Happy Christmas, Fortescue."

COMMENT

Green light for 16-plus

The letter which the Secondary Examination Council sent to the Secretary of State last week marks the completion of the SEC's first practical task. As requested by the Secretary of State, Sir Wilfred Cockcroft and his colleagues reviewed the proposed national criteria, concluded that it "is educationally feasible and desirable to go ahead with a single system of examining" monitored by the SEC, and made a unanimous recommendation that such a system, "underpinned by the national criteria", should be introduced.

On a few contentious issues raised by the Secretary of State with regard to the criteria, members of the SEC found no difficulty in papering over the cracks. Like the examining bodies, they favoured the inclusion of material on the relevant social and economic issues. But like Sir Keith, they did not want students to get physics qualifications by answering questions which didn't demand any knowledge of physics.

So "technological applications and socio-economic interactions must both be given due prominence... but it will not be permissible to set examination questions which can be answered without knowledge of the appropriate physics". Whether this neat formula covers all the practical eventualities remains to be seen. It will still be possible for the socially aware physics teacher to tackle a wide range of interesting and controversial topics, but any danger that this will be available as a soft option for the weaker brethren (if it ever existed) has been headed off.

The SEC statement stresses, the



Sir Wilfred Cockcroft

curriculum development which will be required if the criteria are to be applied to teaching. It is important to insist that there is a fundamental difference between syllabus prescription and curriculum development - development is much more difficult and requires a great deal of solid effort of many different levels. The SEC clearly recognizes this. But even if Sir Keith recognizes it too, the problem remains of how to channel funds to the schools for this purpose. If a bit more were allowed in the Rate Support Grant to take care of this, it would not make any practical difference in development terms.

All it would do would be to reduce fractionally the amount by which authorities were held to be overspending without channelling any extra funds where they were needed. This needs to be faced. Without some new formula, there is no prospect of releasing the resources required for development in schools which Sir Wilfred Cockcroft and his colleagues rightly believe have

The SEC's advice will not necessarily be binding on the Secretary of State who will finally decide in the summer whether or not to give the unified 16-plus structure the green light. The SEC has given advice on both the desirability and the feasibility of the arrangements. There is no evidence, however, that the Secretary of State looks to the SEC for advice on the main policy issue: if for instance, early in the New Year Sir Keith confirms that he is going ahead with some form of subsidiary examination in connection with A levels, this will have been done without the formal advice of the SEC. The SEC clearly knows its place and won't complain, but it does seem a bit odd.

So far, so good

The fact that last week's Manchester talks on the most radical restructuring of teachers' salary scales since the war made such remarkably good progress provided an unexpected, intimation of seasonal goodwill.

Obviously, both the local authority employers and the teachers' leaders have to remain cautious in their optimism, and the unions in particular are getting close to the point where they will want to see how discussions about an extended entry grade and a "main professional grade" would fit into the existing salary structure. But they were prepared to talk about assessment at the end of two or three years on the entry grade - and possibly beyond, into what is already becoming known as the MPO - and they have not yet dismissed a link between assessment and accelerated progression (and therefore pay).

There seem to be some signs of progress in the working party to get

down to business at their residential session.

The first was a simple application of group dynamics: they were away from the long, narrow Burnham table, with its adversarial attitudes and tight agendas, and able to spend as much time as they needed going through the details of the management proposals for the first time in full.

Second, and more important, the teachers were impressed by the size and weight of the local authority representation - as well as by the genuine participation of the DES team - that the management side is seriously committed to creating a professional system which better reflects the needs of the service and of teachers themselves in a changing world of declining rolls.

Much talking remains to be done: on the job description which the employers insist must be an integral part of the package this time; on the national criteria which the NUT want to be the basis of any assessment which is linked to rewards; on how the new management concept of allowances beyond the salary grades might be used to reward merit in the classroom. And, of course, there has to be an incentive to keep on talking - some self assurance from Sir Keith that he is sufficiently impressed by progress to try to persuade his Cabinet colleagues that the bill is worth paying in 1985-86.

no comment

"Councillor James Manson (Con, Tidenham) was in favour of the super grammar school. He said: 'We want all the best and the brightest to be short of them. If we don't have more of them we will fall behind other countries. This is the reason why we do not have a grammar school in Tidenham.'"

November 11.

Second opinion

Why Croydon has got it wrong

In response to the Department of Education, local authorities are preparing to give an account of the new curriculum patterns being followed in their schools. With new urgency we are being quite properly asked to look at the balance across the curriculum: at the extent to which skills and knowledge and understanding can sensibly be implied to reside in separate pockets, and at the possibility of fairer and more sensitive assessment of individual achievement. It is not surprising, therefore, that L.E.A.s are re-examining their role. What I find interesting is the apparently stark contrast between the ways in which the Inner London Education Authority and Croydon are going about this task. From the reports it looks like this:

The ILEA has called in an outside person with a great deal of experience of teachers and the classroom, and of possible ways of bringing to bear on the curriculum different emphases, different groupings and different teaching methods. With members of its committee, he has visited large numbers of ILEA schools to discover what is going on in the classrooms, to identify perceived problems and practices which seem to be working well. From this it is presumably hoped that a plan will emerge which will command the understanding and support of most teachers.

In Croydon it seems that the process has been for the elected members to make up their own minds on some sort of absolute grounds what the curriculum should be; to define the required outcomes, all of which must be simply measurable by tests; and then to take suitable punitive action against any school or teacher whose results do not reach certain standards. It is felt that this will make quite clear what the schools are supposed to be doing so that all parents will know where they are.

Perhaps the ILEA scheme seems woolly, whereas the Croydon scheme has the smack of firm government. But what will be the outcome? To me the ILEA seems to be employing "good industrial management" - finding out what is really going on on the shop floor, capitalising on the good ideas that are already there, moving things in a direction which makes sense to as many as possible. Croydon sounds like a recipe for disaster.

I do not for a moment doubt that the Croydon councillors sincerely want to make their schools as effective as possible. But those schools are already preparing their pupils for public examinations with written syllabuses each year group already has its own syllabuses which lead on to the public examinations.

In what sense will councillors' ideas be better? And how can they hope that teachers will teach well within the strait-jacket which they are seeking to impose? Surely they believe that the teachers whom they have appointed, although of course they will be a mixed bag (as is true of education officers, education committee members of any other group), in the vast majority of cases entirely share their concern for the success of the schools.

If they convey the message that they do not trust them and are therefore going to reduce the curriculum to a series of easily teachable knowledge-points (which the pupil can forget on Saturday as long as he remembers on Friday) they will be stifling their best important asset - the professionalism of their teachers.

Donald Frith

Mr Frith retired in August as General Secretary of the Secondary Schools Association.

NEWS

Sir Keith passes NAB plans for restructuring colleges and polys

Public sector HE plans approved

by Biddy Passmore

Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary this week approved plans to restructure higher education in colleges and polytechnics - just 10 days after he had received them from the National Advisory Body.

The plans, to be implemented next year, will mean a new student intake some 2,000 higher than last year, bringing the total of first year full-time and sandwich students up to 86,500 (the new university intake is expected to be between 70,000 and 74,000 next autumn). Most of the new places are in science, technology and business studies.

But although the Government has provided an extra £20m to avoid a cut in intake, institutions will still be paying for more students with 6-7 per cent less money.

And some 20 courses will close and the future of half a dozen institutions is in doubt, as a result of NAB's dual policy of shifting places from arts towards science and maths and away from London and the South East towards other regions, especially East Anglia.

Nottingham College of physical education in Kent, where no new students will be admitted next autumn, will definitely close, and West Midlands College of Higher Education, which loses all courses other than teacher training, is under threat of closure.

In addition, Hertfordshire College loses its BA degree in combined studies and is expected to merge with Hatfield Polytechnic, probably in 1985. Fleetwood Nautical College in Lancashire, will lose all its advanced work.

In Inner London, NAB would like to see a merger between Thames Polytechnic and Avery Hill College and between St Martin's School of Art and the Central School of Art and Design. But the Inner London Education Authority is currently conducting its own review of higher education which may come up with different proposals so it has been given overall funding and student figures for next year and allowed to allocate them itself.

Departments that will close - but whose closure will not threaten the existence of their colleges - include town and country planning at Liverpool Polytechnic, Trent Polytechnic and Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology. The degree course in environmental health at Bristol Polytechnic will be withdrawn.

Bristol is also to lose its only engineering course: the polytechnic's BSc in technology with industrial studies, recently sharply criticized by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. Ravensbourne College of Art has also lost its struggle to keep its fine art degree and must now concentrate on

more applied degree courses and work for television.

Two departments which have been repressed are town and country planning at Leeds Polytechnic and architecture at the North East London Polytechnic.

And last-minute plans to concentrate more courses in large colleges, which would have led to mergers between Maidstone and Canterbury Colleges of Art and between Bath College of Art and Bristol Polytechnic, and the ending of advanced work of Richmond tertiary college, have been shelved.

Overall, there will now be the equivalent of some 260,000 full-time students in local authority higher education next year, about 17,000 more than in 1982-83 (the base planning year). The equivalent of 65,000 places will be part-time and 197,000 full-time. 100,000 places will be at sub-degree level.

The NAB committee approved nearly 60 new courses for next year when it met on Monday, about half of those submitted. In order to gain approval, they had to be job-related and compatible with the rest of the planning exercise. These courses account for about 1,200 of the new intake of 86,500 next year. They still have to be formally approved by the Education Secretary and institutions must then seek validation.

The new intake target also includes 225 additional places in information technology, on top of the 1,200 available in the current year. Two new centres are to start up at Preston and Manchester Polytechnics, nine centres will be enlarged and there will be two new post-graduate centres at Maidstone Polytechnic and the Polytechnic of Central London.

There was quiet satisfaction at the NAB headquarters in London this week that the gruelling, 18-month exercise had been completed on time. NAB officials had only four days in which to work out cash allocations to institutions between the agreement on a funding formula and the submission of detailed advice to the Education Secretary, which was contained in 10 fat volumes.

Now the new body must get to work on planning for 1985 and beyond. Work on the concentration of courses has already started in a special study group chaired by Mr Christopher Bull, chairman of the NAB board, and there is to be a special planning exercise on the future of the former colleges of education. NAB will also gradually take over responsibility for voluntary colleges.

But it is still not certain how long the new body will last. When Sir Keith Joseph accepted its advice this week, he said he would be considering its long-term future in the New Year.

Outcry on dearer pensions proposal

by Richard Garner

Teachers could be forced to pay more towards their pension scheme from next April with the publication of the Government's report on superannuation this week.

Sir Keith Joseph, Education Secretary, is now considering the recommendation of the report that the total contribution met by teachers and their employers should rise from 14.4 per cent to 15.4 per cent.

The report, by Mr Edward Johnson, of the Government's actuary department, has provoked an outcry from teachers' leaders - some of whom warned of industrial action if the government sought to force teachers to pay for the recommended increases.

The report says that 0.25 per cent of the 1.05 per cent increase should be met by the employers. The remaining 0.80 per cent should be met by either the teachers, the employers or a mixture of both.

If the 0.80 per cent is met in full by the teachers, it would mean a teacher earning the average classed salary of £8,213 a year who contributes to the pension scheme would have to contribute an extra £65 a year. Those just entering the profession at the bottom of the pay scale - £5,178 a year - would have to pay just over £41 while the highest paid headteachers over £21,828 would have to contribute nearly £175 a year more.

The assessment - which is carried out at five yearly intervals - gives several reasons for the increase. It points out that the drain on the pension fund has increased as more and more teachers are retiring because of ill-health and an increased number are seeking premature retirement compensation. It estimates that there will be about 65,000 premature retirements between 1981 and the end of the decade.

It adds that those who retire, are living longer.

However, teachers' leaders are incensed by the threat of the increase. Mr Nigel de Gruchy, deputy general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, claimed it was "sinister" to make the announcement just before Christmas and warned that teachers would be urging their unions to resort to industrial action if the increases went ahead.

He added that under the present pensions system, whereby payments to the scheme are notionaly invested by the Government, there was about £10,000m in the fund.

He warned that any move to increase pension contributions could jeopardise the talks on salary restructuring, which made significant progress at last week's three-day meeting in Manchester between teachers and employers, and threaten next year's pay negotiations.

Mr Doug McAvo, deputy general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "Teachers will be very angry if they have to bear the brunt of the suggested increase in pension contributions."

Discussions are now likely to take place between the Government, local authorities and teachers' leaders early in the New Year - but in the end the decision on whether to implement the recommendations of the report and how they should be carried out rests with Sir Keith.

Teachers' leaders warned an increase on the cards at the TUC conference earlier this year. The conference was told that the police and fire services had had to accept increases of four per cent in their contributions to their pension schemes.

Britain's universities called this week for the broadening of the sixth-form curriculum through the introduction of a new, intermediate-level exam, to be taken alongside A levels. But they said A levels must stay to safeguard entry standards to higher education and that any moves to broaden the sixth-form curriculum must be optional.

These views, set out in a letter from Dr David Ingram, chairman of the Standing Conference on University Entrance, to Sir Peter Swinerton-Dyer, chairman of the University Grants Committee, were given the unanimous backing of the vice-chancellors' committee last week.

They are known to be shared by Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, who is expected to give the go-ahead to the new exam in January. The exam, which would be based on two-year courses with half the teaching time of an A level, is usually referred to as "I" or "Intermediate" level, but it is believed the DES has devised a new name.

Sir Keith will probably issue a consultative document next month announcing his decision to introduce the exam in principle and asking for



Kent's new education officer is to be Mr Brian Outley (pictured) at present the deputy education officer. Mr Outley, 48, takes over from Mr Bill Petty who has held the post for 10 years and plans to retire next February. Mr Outley joined Kent County Council in 1964 and took up his present post ten years later.

Pay rise revolt headed off

by David Jobbins

A revolt over the way next year's pay rise should be distributed is to be resisted by leaders of the college lecturers' union.

They favour a simple percentage rise but face demands for a flat rate claim from four of the 14 regions of the 75,000 member National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

University lecturers are to claim 8 to 9 per cent next year as well as a range of structural demands. A package was endorsed by the Association of University Teachers' winter council in Hull at the weekend and is to be lodged with the employers by the end of January.

The AUT is likely to try to tilt the award towards the lower paid but the leaders of the college lecturers' union are opposed to this approach after adopting it for the past two years.

Already under pressure from the 3

per cent target for public sector pay and the probability of higher pensions contributions, the NATFHE leadership faces a polarization of views among its own members.

This year only two regions favour the compromise compared with eight at the same point in the exercise for the last pay round. But of the four supporting a flat rate one, East Midlands is a convert from the compromise formula and a second, Inner London, is embarrassing to union leaders because its secretary, Mr David Triesman, was one of the supporters of the simple percentage claim.

But union leaders, who will be discussing the issue over coming weeks, will be able to comfort themselves that at the moment there is a clear majority for their proposals. - THES

comments on the details, such as how many subjects should be offered.

The universities would like the exam to be offered in core subjects, such as maths and modern languages, so that it would encourage arts and science specialists to keep up contrasting subjects, as well as in subjects like design and technology, electronics and archaeology.

But Sir Keith may prefer to confine the exam to a narrower range of subjects aimed at providing a contrast to the sixth former's main subjects rather than a complement to them.

Rates curb law moves a step nearer

A Bill which could lead to the fosa of thousands of teachers' jobs was published on Tuesday. *Biddy Passmore* writes. If passed, it will force at least a dozen of the highest spending councils to curb their spending by leaving them powerless to raise rates by more than a centrally determined limit.

But the Rates Bill also contains a reserve power to extend the curbs to all councils. The Bill is planned to take effect from 1985.

Mr Patrick Jenkin, the Environment Secretary, said the Bill's main purpose was to protect ratepayers from exorbitant rate increases. He stressed that the great majority of local authorities in England and Wales had "nothing to fear" from the selective scheme and would actually benefit from it, because control of the big spenders would enable him to reduce the pressure on all the rest.

"The reserve power would be used 'only if absolutely necessary', he said, and could only be invoked after approval by both Houses of Parliament preceded by consultations with the local authority associations.

But Mr Jenkin's soothing words seem unlikely to stem opposition to the Bill. The proposals, born of desperation over the Government's failure to control local spending, have been fiercely attacked by the local authority associations and ministers are known to be worried that they might come to grief in Parliament.

An embarrassing revolt of some 20 to 30 Tory MPs is confidently predicted in the Commons and may prove to be an underestimate, as many of the new intake have recent local government experience. But the stiffest test is likely to come in the House of Lords, where the Tory controlled Association of County Councils is thought likely to drum up enough opposition to the plans to defeat at least the general scheme.

Under the selective scheme set out in the Bill, the Government would first choose a group of between 12 and 20 high-spending councils, certain to include the Inner London Education Authority but also likely to cover Brent, Haringey, Sheffield and Manchester.

The Environment Secretary would set in July a spending level requiring a cut for each of those authorities. They would then be able to plead for more headroom between August and December. A rate limit would then be set in January for each of the authorities allowing them to spend at the agreed level and no more.

If no agreement were reached, the Environment Secretary would then back up his decision with an order requiring parliamentary approval. If the authority tried to exceed the legal maximum, the ratepayers would not have to pay it.

Meanwhile, some authorities will suffer slightly less than expected from the system of targets and grant penalties for next year (1984-85).

Mr Jenkin told the Commons last week that authorities now spending more than two per cent below target would have their targets raised.

The penalties for overspending, however, remain unchanged. They start at backload of a 2p rate throughout the first one per cent of overspending (not 1p, as stated in last week's TES) and are thus twice as fierce as the current year's.

Copyright writ

Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham, was this week served with writs alleging infringement of copyright over photocopied music, the first such case brought by the music publishers.

After a hearing in camera, interim injunctions were issued against Northumberland County Council and the school's director of music on behalf of three members of the Music Publishers Association. A hearing is likely to take place early in January.

PLATFORM

1933 Expansion, bodyline, Hitler . . . 16-plus, new tech and violence

Nigel Richardson leafs through *The TES* of 50 years ago, and finds another era – but one with some familiar features

In many respects 1933 seems much more than a single world war away. So much seems to divide us from the year when prohibition ended and the New Deal began, when the Fulbright was founded in Spain and Stalin launched his second Five-Year Plan in Russia.

In 1933 the London Passenger Transport Board was formed and the British Film Institute founded; Churchill wrote *Marlborough: his life and times* while Kodak introduced its Dances of Galatia. ICI scientists discovered polythene. Malcolm Campbell broke the world land speed record and a certain Mr Ralph Richardson played Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*. And if you have a 1933 penny, you are a member of a very exclusive club indeed.

The *TES* for 1933 confirms this impression of distance. In those days it carried a much less specifically educational news content than now. Readers were thus treated to regular reports about the health and travels of royalty and were kept abreast of such events as the death of the Dalai Lama, the first flight over Everest, Amy Johnson's crash-landing near New York and Wales' first rugby union victory at Twickenham.

Much space was devoted to the reconstruction of Waterloo Bridge and to cricket's bodyline controversy; there was a weekly weather chart and a lot of the more "light" news of the day.

On the other hand, although there were two full pages of photographs in every issue, hardly any of the people featured were other than famous, and there were certainly very few pictures, which even included a child. But one striking feature of the photographs is the enormous amount of (especially independent) school buildings of the time, the new campuses of Merchant Taylors' at Sandy Lodge and the Royal Masonic School near Rickmansworth looking positively breathtaking in scale to our own age of flats and careful housekeeping.

And yet, we were told, the Irish Free State was now seeking to follow Britain's 1931 example of a 10 per cent cut in teachers' pay, while *The TES* was wondering if the time had come for the cut here to be restored.

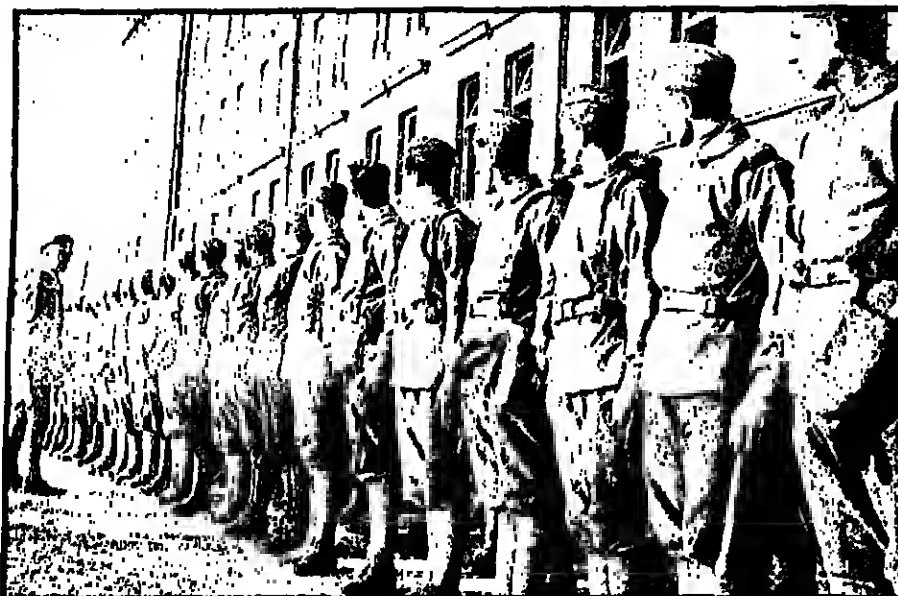
There is no shortage of other striking contrasts. In 1933 an entire school in Buckinghamshire could be built for £9,000. "If has a canteen where two-course meals served by an expert cook will be supplied at 36d a head".

Advertisements appeared for 100 typed testimonial copies for 4s, or £300-500: public school man, 24, seeks junior partnership, large prep school (experienced): salary £200 also share profits. In a long-running dispute in Aberdellery, teachers protested against a local authority ban on corporal punishment on the grounds that "the restriction lowered the respect for the teacher in the eyes of the pupils and the parents".

The importance of PT in instilling "confidence and leadership" as well as fitness was in evidence, and the Chief of the General Staff, opening the new gymnasium at Bradford, declared that "in spite of what one read in certain newspapers", our public schools were the foundations of the country and the envy of many other countries.

This confident belief in manliness outdoors was taken up by the speaker at the Old Mancunians annual dinner who declared that "educated leaders of men" were the best thing Britain could give the dominions, and by the writer of a letter on August 19 who wrote:

The great outdoors



Physical education in Germany (above) . . . The *TES* carried this photograph in accompanying an article describing the way the new German army was taking shape in field exercise camps . . .

Physical education in England (left) . . . In keeping with the spirit of open-air manliness, Jack Hobbs coaches young cricketers in Surrey



Shaping the realm . . . The future Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret at play in Hertfordshire

consider that Sunday afternoons or a suitable occasion for playing healthy open-air games, it seems a pity that public schoolboys should be compelled to spend their time in stiff and uncomfortable clothes, going for a walk in the country".

Urging the formation of Sunday scout troops, he concluded: "It is all such good fun. The boys love it. . . the trucking, sense-training, bridge-building etc instantly appeals to them, whether they are prefects or new boys". He would surely have approved of *The Boy's Guide*, reviewed in a December issue which "illustrates all kinds of fishing tackle, many gardening processes, workshop tools, signalling, how to take care of clothes (with diagrams of how to fold a coat), how to care for things generally from hands and teeth and hair to umbrellas, canoes, petrol and watertraps".

On the other hand there is much that seems strangely familiar today. There was considerable debate about the school leaving age (should it be raised to 15?) and anxiety over plans for exam reform of 16-plus (would it mean stricter papers but easier marking?).

columns over the fate of Church colleges and the balance of representation between the various denominations – Chester, Bristol and Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, being threatened with temporary closure. The cost of living was a matter of concern – prices were 42 per cent above the July 1914 level, *TES* readers were told. The IAPS was agonizing over whether the time had come to end compulsory Latin (although the spontaneous demand for Greek in a girls' school at Sonning-on-Thames had led to the importation of a local archdeacon), while the under-represented value of art in the curriculum, and the lack of boys pupils attracted by industry and the lack of contact between industry and schools was earnestly noted.

There was also a Bill about to reform the House of Lords, and long ministerial statements in "Another Place" about the Loch Ness Monster. King William College, Isle of Man was setting its "Festschrift" annual test paper even then. In recent collections published in paperback in 1982, the principal stated loftily that

who are regarded as educational specialists, but at the school its usefulness has definitely been proved over the past 28 years. Child violence was on the increase, according to the NSPCC. There was much demand for smaller classes in primary schools and in feeling that falling rolls made this a real possibility.

Two other similarities stand out. First, children don't really change – a report on a school fire stated: "One boy rose at 5 each day; another could never complete his paper delivery in less than an hour and a quarter, and a third was daily engaged in carrying heavy milk pails which would have taxed the strength of most of a full-grown man. How many grown-up people would care to have to do 'overtime' between 7am and 8am or face the prospect of two hours' overtime every day in the week in addition to a full-time job? For school, it can never be said too often, is a full-time job for a child".

January 21 reported a lecture to the Television Society at University College. "The reproduced picture image is formed by the impact of an electron beam on a sensitive screen in a vacuum tube. It is estimated that a complete home receiving installation could be produced for about £20". In the same month the paper drew attention to the 450 schools which had got "broadcasting apparatus" during the previous year and concluded that "the educational danger of both broadcasting and films is their use by unskilled teachers and the giving of false or scroppy impressions of facts and events. The full training of teachers in these new instruments of culture is essential in all training colleges".

The paper also praised the new cinema motives for schoolchildren in Glasgow, where teachers chose the films and wrote accompanying notes – "Here we have the most potent instrument for visual teaching yet (elsewhere) we make merely a frivolous use of such equipment and allow children and adults to look at heterogeneous and frequently artificial and distorted pictures without realizing the educational value".

Educational controversies during the year included one on the content of history teaching. A recent royal commission had observed that "Seldom is a question set (in European history) which suggests that a child of 16 will find anything of importance in the development of transport, commerce, manufacturing, agriculture, organized labour, education, exploration, hygiene, municipal life, art, literature, or science during the period. There ought to be an opportunity to . . . arouse interest in world markets and the exchange of goods".

Science lessons, meanwhile, would "snatch inquiry into modern inventions and electrical and other plans". A Mrs Corbett Ashley sought to shift the ground of the debate when she addressed the National Peace Conference at Oxford and attacked the headmaster of Rugby for claiming a vast improvement in the quality of history books over the previous generation. Never one to mince words, it seems, she declared that the average English schoolboy "will laboriously learn the dates of all the battles between his own country and his neighbours, his glorious victories over the weakling and inferior races by which he is surrounded, or the bitter defeats awaiting revenge at the hands of unrighteous and grasping enemies. He leaves school without any idea that his country owes anything to others".

Nineteen thirty-three was also the year when a Hampshire solicitor sought an injunction against the speaker next door on the grounds that her nursery school was too noisy and negatively influenced the health and well-being of her own children. The argument over whether Scottish children were braver than their Sassenach counterparts.

In a long debate about whether part-time work by children hindered school progress, *The TES* conjured up a powerful picture: "One boy rose at 5 each day; another could never complete his paper delivery in less than an hour and a quarter, and a third was daily engaged in carrying heavy milk pails which would have taxed the strength of most of a full-grown man. How many grown-up people would care to have to do 'overtime' between 7am and 8am or face the prospect of two hours' overtime every day in the week in addition to a full-time job? For school, it can never be said too often, is a full-time job for a child".

Finally, perhaps the most significant event of 1933: a small paragraph in the first issue in February was headlined "The New Chancellor". It announced the appointment of one Adolf Hitler to the post of Chancellor of the Reich. The *TES* observed: "Future intentions were outlined in resounding but vague phrases, calculated to appeal only to the emotions". Not bad assessment in the light of later events – could it be that Neville Chamberlain was not numbered

NEWS

Bradford launches inquiry into race attacks claim

by Diane Spencer

Education chiefs in Bradford have launched an inquiry into allegations of racial attacks and of recruitment to the National Front in the city's secondary schools.

The Asian Youth Movement claimed last week that in Ecclestone Upper School there was: "Racist graffiti, including Nazi swastikas, daubed on the walls. NF and British Movement propaganda circulating among pupils. Violence between white and Asian pupils. Asian pupils who were also afraid to attend classes."

Mr Peter Gilmore, chairman of the Conservative-controlled education committee, said: "We accept that we have a problem in some of our schools, and we are taking the allegations seriously."

"The results of the inquiry will be published. We must show that we mean business and at the same time we must be fair and reasonable."

Bradford Council issued guidelines to heads on racial harassment earlier this term urging them to make records of racist incidents to pass on to the authority.

Mr Kenneth Lickley, the head of Ecclestone, said: "The idea that the school is riddled with graffiti, National Front members and perpetual racial violence is absolutely and categorically wrong."

The school was situated between two council estates and on a main



Bill Stubbs . . . complaint over article

thoroughfare so the back of the school was vulnerable, he said. He had found one "tiny amount of graffiti outside the school".

Mr Lickley was not aware of racist literature circulating in the school or that some Asian children were frightened of going to school.

Five teachers at Wyke Manor Upper School in Bradford are being questioned by education department officers over claims of racism among staff.

The inquiry is being held after

allegations were made by a supply teacher, Mr Christopher Perry. He claimed that racist remarks made about Mr Carlton Duncan, Bradford's only black head, were degrading to the school and affecting pupils.

Mr Perry has been suspended on full pay by the authority until the inquiry has finished. The decision to remove him was taken mainly because of an article about his allegations which appeared in *The News of the World*.

"We felt that the normal running of the school was in jeopardy," said Mr Alan Jones, assistant education officer. He will study the statements from the teachers and decide on any action to be taken.

Three education chiefs have protested to the Sun newspaper over two articles published earlier this month on multi-racial schools in Britain.

Mr Peter Edwards, director of education in Berkshire, Mr Andrew Fairbairn (Leicester) and Mr Bill Stubbs (Inner London Education Authority) told the paper's editor that the articles were "extremely misleading and likely to have done a great deal of harm".

The articles on December 8 "quoted a number of extremely negative generalizations about black children reinforced by the use of emotive headlines and subheadings", said the directors.

Parents, teachers and children in Berkshire were "deeply upset by the photographic manipulation of young children from a Slough school to support the racist tone of the article".

Brent Tories offer jobs pledge

Conservatives, who took control of the Brent council in north-west London last week, have pledged not to sack any teachers, keep the pupil teacher ratio at its present level and give more autonomy to heads.

The Tories were able to wrest power

from Labour after the defection to them of Mrs Ambrosine Nett, a black Labour councillor and then chairman of the education committee.

The council is now composed of 31 Tories, 31 Labour and three Liberals. Mr Bob Lacey, the new leader, said this week that his party would give

more assistance and support to heads to run their own schools.

He also pledged that Brent would continue to be an equal opportunities employer. "We will not tolerate racism and sexism; we intend to be fair to everyone."

PRIMARY

Why promotion is slow in nurseries

Nursery teachers suffer from an acute lack of promotion prospects, says the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers.

In a booklet, *Nursery education – a policy statement*, the NAS/UNT issues a reminder that nursery education is available only for 11 per cent of the estimated three and four-year-old population – despite a pledge given when Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, was Education Secretary in 1972 that it would be available to all who wished it free of charge within 10 years.

It says that many local education authorities – although employing headteachers in nursery schools – do not consider a deputy head to be a necessary requirement and rely upon sole one and two teachers to perform this task when required.

The absence of deputy headteacher posts within nursery schools limits the career structure of the nursery teacher even more acutely than that of teachers employed in small primary

schools", it adds.

"Most of the teachers responsible for such departments can expect no higher award or status than a scale two post as the majority of nursery classes are attached to primary schools which also suffer from the 'small school syndrome'."

The booklet calls on L.E.s to make surplus places in primary schools available for nursery education as part of a move to harness falling rolls to provide a better standards of education. It also calls for more promotion opportunities to be made available for nursery teachers.

It says that there is a wide difference in the amount of nursery provision provided by L.E.s, ranging from nothing in Gloucestershire to provision for 62 per cent of three and four-year-olds in Hounslow. L.E.s providing places for less than 5 per cent of the age range include Bromley, Havering, Dorset, Essex, Hampshire, Hereford, and Worcester, Kent, Norfolk, Somerset, West Sussex and Wiltshire.

Truce in staffroom row

A Christmas truce has been declared in the howl which led to 12 teachers at a Liverpool primary school going on strike when city council leaders backed a demand from the school's caretaker that he should be allowed to use their staffroom.

Members of both the National Union of Teachers and the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, at the school, West Dorby, went on two

one-day strikes over the issue.

Mr Jim Ferguson, local executive member of the NUT, said that the future of the dispute would depend on whether the caretakers' union, the GMBATU (the General Municipal and Boilermakers' and Allied Trades Union), pursued its policy of seeking access to staff rooms. Under statute, teachers are entitled to a room of their own in a school.

Mr Ferguson said that the school's caretaker, Mr John Dorby, went on two

Two-year degrees under heavy fire

by Bert Lodge

The idea of two-year degrees was attacked at the biannual conference of the Association of University Teachers at Hull last week.

Professor William Wallace, director of Glasgow University Institute of Soviet and East European Studies, said such a degree was no degree at all. He was supporting a motion deploring Government attempts to contract university education, including the possibility of two-year courses. His amendment called for the extension of many existing degrees.

"The fundamental thing is that a certain amount of time is required to mature the student at undergraduate level. It can't be done in two years."

He was also suspicious of Government enthusiasm for more cooperation between universities and public sector institutions. "We approve of cooperation so long as it is for a good educational purpose – but not if it is just for the sake of cheapness."

"We are not interested in reducing educational opportunity in Hull, for instance, just because the university happens to be close to a polytechnic. Nor in Aberdeen."

It was also important that universities should cater for the handicapped, for ethnic minorities, working class children and women. "We should hammer away for standards, hammer at resources, hammer at opportunities," said Professor Wallace.

Miss Diana Warwick, AUT general secretary, said Mr Peter Brooke, junior minister for higher education, had assured the AUT that access to higher education would be maintained at the levels of DES projections. "That amounts to a cut of 20 per cent by 1985-87," she said.

"We must ask these questions: is the university system going to be elitist or one that breaks down social barriers, widens the possibility of research and study?"

Gloom over reorganization

by David Lister

Teachers in Hull face a gloomy Christmas with morale said to be "as low as you can possibly get."

Humberside councillors and officials are considering school reorganization proposals for the city and as reported in last week's *TES*, are looking closely at a plan to dismantle the whole 9-13 middle school system.

Last week's HM Inspectorate national survey said that standards in 9-13 schools are generally less than satisfactory. HMI concluded that if middle schools are to perform, age for age, as well as primaries and secondaries are expected to perform, they will become increasingly expensive when rolls are falling.

No reorganization plans have yet been made public but if Hull's system

of 53 middle schools were dismantled every school in the city would of course be affected.

Hull's National Association of Head Teachers local secretary Mr Hugh Gainer, head of David Lister High School, said: "There is a very great deal of concern in every tier about this. Morale is about as low as you could possibly get. Middle schools are an important transitional step between the class-taught primary school and the subject-taught curriculum of the secondary school."

Humberside director of education, Mr John Dwyer, said: "There is a genuine anxiety as to whether middle schools can deliver the full curriculum below 360 pupils. Some of our schools have under 200 pupils."

Blacks start out on a par

by Nick Wood

Standards of literacy and numeracy among black children are as good as those of whites when they first go to school, according to the first findings of a major new survey of educational achievement in the infant school.

The results conflict with those from earlier research such as the IEA literacy survey, which have shown that white children are significantly ahead of those of West Indian origin as young as 7 or 8 years of age – a disparity that becomes more marked as children get older.

They come from a team of researchers at the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education in London who measured early reading, maths and writing skills among 277 five-year-olds (171 white and 106 West Indian) at the time they entered 33 infant schools in working class areas of London.

The two groups were from similar social classes though the blacks were more likely to be poorer and to come from broken homes.

The findings were presented to the annual London conference of the British Psychological Society by Dr Peter Blatchford, one of the survey team. "Results so far indicate there is a wide range of variation in children's skills in literacy and numeracy on entry into infant school at about five years of age."

"If these differences are maintained, there will be wide differences in later educational achievement."

"These differences are not attributable to children's ethnic origin and only partly to their gender. It will, therefore, be difficult to account for later ethnic differences in progress (should these arise) by bias in entry into school."

The researchers also interviewed a sample of 202 parents to see if factors



"The most notable finding was how few differences there were between the two ethnic groups," Dr Blatchford said. "There was no difference between the total test scores. Only on two of the mathematics sub-tests were there any significant differences."

"Despite the widely held belief that black children have an inferior language development, they performed just as well on the quite difficult WPSI vocabulary sub-test, that is defining various words."

"There are no significant interactions in test scores between sex of child and ethnic group. There was no evidence, for example, that black boys were doing any worse than the other three groups."

The researchers also interviewed a sample of 202 parents to see if factors

such as social background and parental attitudes towards, and involvement in, children's education was linked to the test scores.

Two factors – the educational qualifications of the mother and the amount of home tuition by parents – were found to have a major bearing on a child's test scores. Others such as family size, one parent family, mother's occupation, father's occupation, were not linked to the scores.

The fact that a mother had good educational qualifications did not mean she also spent more time teaching her child to read, write or add up.

Surprisingly perhaps, black mothers were better qualified than whites. Only a quarter had no exam passes, a proportion that rose to a half for whites.

SCHOOL TO WORK

Reprieve for lecturers facing sack

by Mark Jackson

Twenty five lecturers faced with the sack over Christmas because of their county's losses on the Youth Training Scheme have been given a test-minute reprieve. Their colleges have offered to find the money for their salaries for the time being by making other savings.

Devon County Council, determined to reduce the spending which cost it nearly £2m in Government penalties this year, has decided not to run any loss-making YTS courses next year. And at a special meeting earlier this month the education committee agreed to issue redundancy notices to the lecturers, that would have taken effect next year.

But now the committee's chairman, Mr Ted Pinney, has announced that the notices will not be issued because the three colleges, Exeter, Plymouth, and South Devon Tech, have found other ways of saving the £150,000 which would have been gained by dropping the YTS courses concerned.

But Mr Pinney warns that this does not mean the lecturers' jobs are now safe. He says that question of giving them notice may have to be reconsidered at Easter in the light of whatever deal the local authorities reach with the Manpower Services Commission over YTS courses.

And he told *THE TES* this week: "We are not going to run any courses at a loss - we shall hope to make a profit

out of them if possible." Mr Pinney added that if the courses were discontinued the authority would have to consider making the lecturers redundant.

His statements have, however, led to some uncertainty in Devon's education department, where some officers had thought that if the colleges came up with the required savings - which will not take effect until the coming financial year - there would be no further need to consider redundancies.

There is a wider uncertainty about what Mr Pinney's ultimatum to the MSC will mean in the end. The scale of fees paid to the colleges for providing off-the-job training and education under the YTS Mode A, which Mr Pinney and other local authority leaders throughout the country are insisting must be raised, will only affect the courses which are run for trainees sponsored by employers.

Local authorities are also acting as managing agents themselves, taking the MSC grant as though they were employers and paying their colleges for the off-the-job training provided. Where they do this, it clearly makes no difference what the level of fees is.

So, even if the local authority associations strike a better deal with the MSC and the employers over the fees for Mode A off-the-job training, it will not improve the funding of Devon's own local-authority-run Mode A

schemes; that would require a raising of the Government grant to all Mode A sponsors, a highly expensive step. What nobody in Devon yet knows is whether Mr Pinney will apply the same test of profitability to these courses as to those run for employers. The issue could be crucial, because if Devon cuts back its courses for schemes run by employers, there may be a big increase in the demand from youngsters for places in the local authority-run schemes.

Apart from its moves to get rid of the £400,000 annual deficit on the YTS, the education committee has approved a £1m cut in the base education budget. Together with a reduction of some of the remaining expenditure, this will mean a loss of 64 teaching posts.

The school teaching posts are being lost in order to release £521,000 which will be spent implementing the special education provisions of the 1981 Education Act, improving spending on books and technology equipment (including a technology bus), and revamping careers education.

Proposals to admit rising-fives to secondary schools and to develop two new community colleges were thrown out in order to avoid a net loss of a further 50 teaching jobs. But the committee is proposing to cut funds to the polytechnic and other higher

education institutions, for a number of special education places at independent schools and to increase travel costs for sixth formers and students. Savings are also to be made on school meals, and heat, light and cleaning bills. The education cuts are part of a £4m package designed to reduce Devon's overall spending from this year's 2 per cent over Government limits to 1 per cent.

Mr Pinney said it would not be easy to lose all the teaching posts by redeployment at a time when falling rolls were also putting a further 120 jobs in jeopardy.

"No one wants to make these cuts," he said. "They have been forced on us by the arbitrary targets and penalties imposed by the Government on a low-spending authority."

The education budget will be further squeezed by a decision by the county's policy committee to recover any money spent on teachers' pay, above the 4 per cent set allowed for.

Mr Rod Ruffie, the National Union of Teachers' district officer for South West England, said Devon had not been firm enough with central government. "In a rural area where the population was not evenly spread some class sizes were bound to rise steeply as a result of losing posts."

Industrial action by teachers could not be ruled out. "We know our members will want to resist this."



'Taste of work' plans in jeopardy

Work experience for school pupils will have to be cut back if the Government goes ahead with its rate-capping proposals, the local authorities warned this week. The warning was triggered by a report calling for more work experience schemes.

The report, from the Schools Council, calls for more employers to help young people "to get a taste of work" while they are still at school. It says that more than a third of the English and Welsh schools run work experience schemes for fifth or sixth formers, catering for 15-16 per cent of those due soon to leave.

But only an estimated one in ten of the country's employers cooperate most of them offering placements of about three weeks. The report says that work experience schemes available so far for fifth and sixth-formers are welcomed, but only an estimated 10 per cent of employers cooperate with schools in offering courses of about three weeks.

At a time of high unemployment, it suggests, work experience may be one of the few experiences of employment young people have. "A successful period of work experience can help overcome personal feelings of inadequacy and failure some young people have when unemployed," it claims. It lists 15 ways in which work can often be a better teacher than school lessons. These include working alongside adults, meeting the public, working under pressure, and discovering how lessons at school can be useful at work.

The number of young people undergoing school-based work experience as distinct from MSC projects, has been rising for the last ten years, but the pattern varies.

Some schools send all their pupils in a year-group out into the working world for up to three weeks. There are other areas where only a handful of youngsters are given work experience, and sometimes troublesome youngsters are sent on the courses to exclude them from school.

There is no evidence that work experience detracts from examination success, says the report.

The authors acknowledge the co-operation of teachers in Barnsley, Bath, Birmingham, Brent, Ealing, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northampton, Sandwell, Shropshire, Southwark, St George's, Sunderland, Wandsworth, Warley, and Walsingham.

"Work experience in the School Curriculum," by Ian Jamieson, Susan Holmes, and John Perry. The Trident Trust for the Schools Council.

Science for girls

The City of London Polytechnic is launching a girls-only conversion course in the physical sciences, designed for students with arts A levels who want to take up scientific careers.

The 30-week course covers mathematics, physics, chemistry, and an introduction to microcomputers, and "science in context".

Girls resident in the Inner London Education Authority are guaranteed grants for the extra year of study which the course involves.

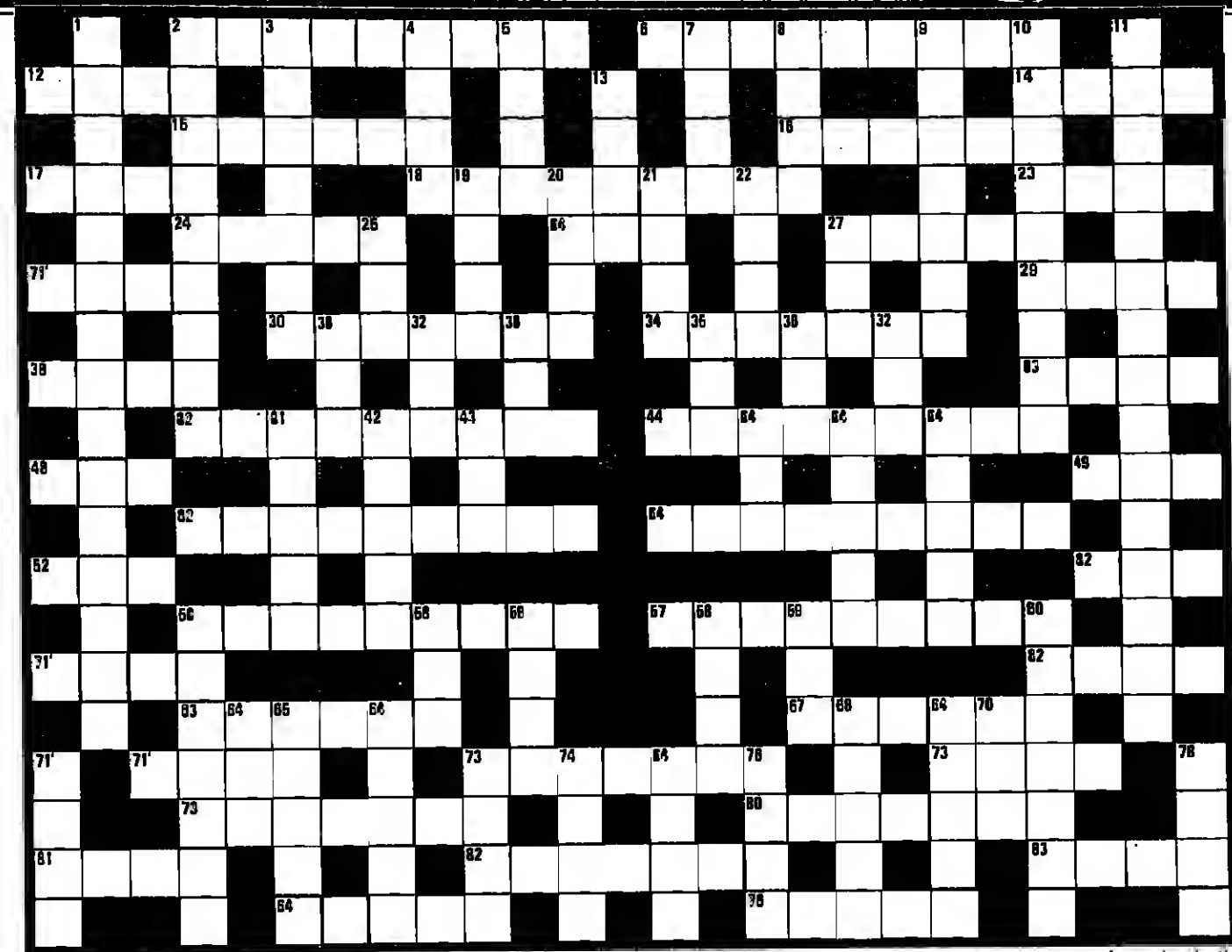
The formal entry requirements are GCE O level passes, preferably including maths and English, and at least one A level.

Edited by
Mark Jackson

TES CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD by Rufus

Across

- 2 It's understandable at Christmas (9)
- 6 You'll find it filling at Christmas (9)
- 12 Bill a drunken man from the East (4)
- 14 A pound's used in good investment (4)
- 15 Present for the champagne on the Christmas tree (8)
- 16 Instruction used in church services (8)
- 17 Ring starts involuntary movement of the ear (4)
- 18 See's feel as traditional English fare (5,4)
- 20 They're drunk and sing wildly (4)
- 21 Bird that is below par (5)
- 22 Join in the festivities (4)
- 27 Decorations have point for those that have over-eaten (5)
- 28 Excursion and dance (4)
- 29 Bring down to earth (4)
- 30 He spent out and had a feast (7)
- 34 It may be held to be humiliating by carol-singers (7)
- 35 Do take this present (4)
- 37 Famous fiddler has some Christmas dinner of course (4)
- 40 Minus pie men? (9)
- 41 God, Tom and I myself produce 70 cresses, for example (9)
- 42 Something in the stocking for one's relatives (3)
- 43 Finally off the Christmas cake (3)
- 44 Yuletide has its charm when properly organized (9)
- 45 One in carol may strain new scales (8)
- 46 Blocking files (3)
- 47 The principal one is usually a girl (3)
- 48 Means to obtain party spirit? (8)
- 49 Time to pack up after Christmas? (8,3)
- 50 The finer the riddle, the smaller it is (4)
- 51 Prompt action to get some of our geese fatted (4)
- 52 Head branch of the



Down

- 1 They gave original Christmas presents (3,5,4,3)
- 2 Earl (5,4)
- 3 Runners carry them along - one is used by Santa when his legs are broken (7)
- 4 It's always in the voice on a greeting card (4)
- 5 Still, I can make a snowman (4)
- 6 A hot-hot-hot exclamation (4)
- 7 Some leg of beef (4)
- 8 Christmas festival has point in the Orient (7)
- 9 The Christmas fare from the Argentine (9)
- 10 Sober geese once, he
- 11 reformed under the influence of spirits (8,7)
- 12 Still, I can make a snowman (4)
- 13 A hot-hot-hot exclamation (4)
- 14 Make a hit unexpectedly by sending up crackers (4)
- 15 The Christmas fare from the Argentine (9)
- 16 Sober geese once, he
- 17 Flowery greeting from simple blenders (3)
- 18 Prayers given before the holiday (4)
- 19 Social workers (4)
- 20 Seasonal blazer (4,3)
- 21 Place of land in the Near East (4)
- 22 Hands up those wanting to exchange gifts (4)

NEWS

Stronger line on sniffing

by Biddy Passmore

Red-eyed youngsters with spotty faces and slurred speech who go to a shop to buy glue will soon be turned away, under guidelines agreed with shopkeepers and announced by the Government last week.

Ministers are also examining urgently the case for a legal ban on the sale of glue-sniffing. "It's usually a polythene bag with glue - Mr John Patten, junior health minister said.

This follows the recent conviction of two shopkeepers in Glasgow for selling kits to schoolchildren. They were jailed for three years under a Scottish common law provision which has no equivalent south of the border.

But Mr Patten made it clear that no other legal changes were being considered. The Government has decided to curb solvent abuse because it would be difficult and probably counter-productive to make it a criminal offence.

The voluntary guidelines to help shopkeepers clamp down on sales cover:

- Notes for sales staff, telling assistants how to recognize the potential sniffer, how to refuse to sell the product and when to tell the manager;
- Notes for the shop manager, with advice on the display of sensitive products, staff training and liaison with the police, and a list of products that might be abused;
- A poster for public display, intended to back up a refusal to sell a product.

Ministers are also to step up the provision of information and guidance to parents and professionals who deal with young people.

The Department of Health and Social Security is now asking the local authority associations if councils would voluntarily centrally prepare leaflets which could be adapted to local requirements.

It is also consulting the Health Education Council on the inclusion of references to glue-sniffing in their educational material.

Other moves include an offer to the

National Children's Bureau to fund a post to gather and disseminate good practice. The DHSS will also contribute to regional seminars for professionals convened by health or local authorities and fund more research on the problem.

A training film/video tape called *Illusions* has already been made for professionals and parent-teacher associations and can be borrowed free of charge from CFI Vision, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, and a book for professionals is to be published by Macmillan next year.

The Home Office will also issue a circular to local police forces reminding them of their existing powers to deal with solvent abuse. These include the power under the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act to detain any youngster in a place of safety if they think his health or development is being damaged and to prosecute for an offence such as insulting or threatening behaviour committed while under the influence of solvents.

Other moves include an offer to the

inter-party deal to ensure adequate representation of minorities.

Other Conservative members are: Mr Robert Key (Salisbury), who, until last June's election, was an economic master at Harrow School; Mr Michael McNair Wilson (Newbury); Dr Gerard Vaughan (Reading, East), formerly health minister and Minister for Consumer Affairs; and Mr George Walden (Buckingham), until the election a senior official in the Foreign Office.

Other Labour members are: Mr Bruce Hughes (Knowsley South), a former teacher; Mr Terry Lewis (Worsley), ex-chairman of Bolton education committee; and Mr Jim Callaghan (Heywood and Middleton), who was for 15 years an art lecturer at St John's College, Manchester.

Science cash share-out

The share-out of next year's science funds to the research councils has been announced by Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary.

As usual, the lion's share goes to the Science and Engineering Research Council, which receives £277.8m out of the total science budget of £549m. This includes an extra £6m since the last public spending White Paper to help the council meet higher subscriptions to international bodies like CERN (the European Centre for Nuclear Research).

The Medical Research Council receives £117.2m, the Natural Environment Research Council £65.9m, the Agricultural and Food Research Council £46.5m, and the Social Science Research Council £22m.

Other moves include an offer to the

New committee line-up

Only two members of the original House of Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts have been chosen again for this Parliament.

They are the Labour MP, Mr Martin Flannery (Hillsborough), and the Conservative Mr Harry Greenway (Ealing N), both former secondary school teachers. One of the newcomers is Mr Clement Freud, the Liberal Party's education spokesman.

The Committee, which is meant to scrutinize the work of the Department of Education and Science, will this time have a Conservative chairman. He is likely to be Sir William Van Straubenzee, MP for Wokingham.

Altogether, the new committee has six Tories, four Labour members and one Liberal. Its membership was increased from 9 to 11 as part of an

Fairer deal for 16-19s demanded

Students to 16-19s should have equal status and financial support, says a booklet by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

The booklet, *Future trends in further and higher education*, calls for greater access to courses and more flexibility in the system. Students in higher education should not be subject to divisive and discriminatory patterns of financial help either.

NATFHE points out that the proportion of those going on to further and higher education in Britain is very much lower than in other major industrial countries.

In France and Germany 80 per cent of those reaching the minimum school leaving age went on to some further education and training in 1979; in Britain less than two-thirds stay on.

There are clear disparities in educational take-up on the basis of class, sex, race and religion, it adds.

Future trends in further and higher education, NATFHE, Hamilton House, Mableton Place, London WC1, 50 pence for members, 65 pence non-members.

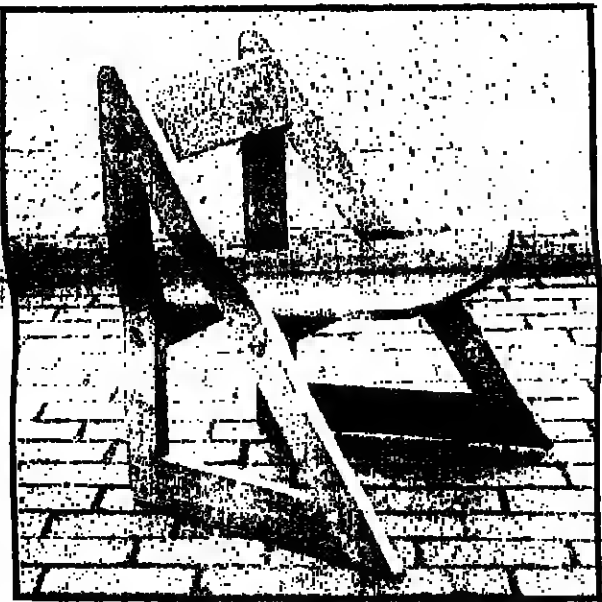
Lower wages more jobs

Lower wages for young people would help create more jobs for them, but this would be mainly at the expense of older workers, according to research from the Department of Employment.

The study suggests that for every 1 per cent cut in the wages of young people relative to those of adults, there would be a rise of up to 2 per cent in the number of jobs available.

A reduction of 10 per cent, about £6 a week of the average earnings of workers under 18, would create between 70,000 and 100,000 extra jobs for young people. But only a fifth of these would be ones that would not otherwise exist. The rest would simply replace older workers.

The relative pay and employment of young people, DE Research Paper No 42, free from DE, Tothill St, London SW1.



Seats of learning: two of the Birmingham Polytechnic contributions to the Young Blood exhibition.

Art and design education in Britain had for years been known as the best in the world, but this was not reflected in its industrial products. Mr Peter Brooke, the minister in charge of higher education, said recently.

Opening the "Young Blood" exhibition of design students' work in London, he said that the recently completed Hayes Report had found that design courses needed to encourage students to be more commercially aware.

"Colleges have been, and continue to be, able to recruit well-qualified young people whose will to study art and

design has been stimulated during their general education at school. This is proof enough that art and design education has a respected place in the school curriculum, though I appreciate that there are those who would welcome greater emphasis on these areas in the formative years." Even so the main reform was needed in the colleges.

● Staff at Solihull Technical College are taking legal advice to stop the council from cutting teaching time on courses in the art and design department.

Mr John Parkinson, the principal, said the number of hours taught was an academic matter, not one for councillors.

The education committee agreed to give the college an extra \$100,000 extra on this year's budget. Mr Colin Humphrey, the director of education, said the councillors had asked, as a *quid pro quo*, that teaching hours in the art and design department be cut, as they were well above the national average.

"No attempt is being made at limiting academic freedom," he added.

YTS provision target will be chopped to a fraction of original

Cutback on college courses

The education service has dropped its opposition to Government and Manpower Services Commission plans to cut back the provision of college-based courses for the Youth Training Scheme in a fraction of the original target.

The Youth Training Board, which local authority education interests, the teaching unions, the careers service, and the youth organizations are represented, has finally approved the recommendations of MSC officials that the number of places in Mode B2, the YTS courses in colleges which are funded directly by the commission, should be cut back to 20,000 next year. This is the number actually filled this year, out of 32,200 approved.

The official task group which devised the YTS had envisaged that, as

well as the 300,000 places provided by employers, another 160,000 would be in schemes sponsored by local authorities and voluntary organizations, with half of these in colleges. In the event, the MSC reduced the targeted provision to 55,200 for the first year of the scheme.

Mr David Young, MSC chairman, has argued that there is no point in keeping even to this target for next year as trainees have voted with their feet against the colleges. But many people in the education service believe that Mr Young has pushed the youngsters away by cutting back the length of the courses from six months to 13 weeks, thus depriving colleges of the chance to offer the kind of training which made them highly attractive under the previous YOT programme.

They also point out that, despite the

fact that the commission is nowhere near filling all the places approved this year in employer-run schemes, it is going to give them the same target for next year.

The board did, however, overturn Mr Young's plan to reduce the other kind of provision outside industry - Mode B1 places in training workshops and community projects - from this year's target of 87,000 to 80,000. But at a press conference afterwards, Mr Young suggested that the commission would actually go for around 85,000 B1 places.

Edited by
Mark Jackson

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NEWS

NOTICEBOARD

PEOPLE...

SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS
Mr R Archer to be head of Taittalgar Junior School, Richmond, from January.
Mr G Kingsley to be head of Meridian School, Royston, Hertfordshire from January.
Mr D McMurray to be head of Oundle School, Northamptonshire from September.

UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS
Professor G Williams, professor of educational planning, Lancaster University, has been appointed to the chair of educational administration at the Institute of Education.

Dr D Harrison, vice-chancellor of the University of Keele, to be vice-chancellor of the University of Exeter from next October.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS
Mr M Benson and Mr R Pearson have been appointed associate directors of the Institute of Manpower Studies.
Brigadier D Ryan to be director, army education, Ministry of Defence from March, with the rank of major-general.

AWARDS...

Anita Mison has been awarded a writer's fellowship at Trinity and All Saints' College, Leeds. The fellowship, funded in conjunction with the Arts Council, has been established to enable a practising author of recognised merit to extend an appreciation of literature within the educational community, and to continue to write.

The National Institute of Careers Education and Counselling has been awarded a grant of £30,000 by the Manpower Services Commission to a one-year project on 'Guidance and the Open Tech Programme'. The project director is Mr J Miller, the associate director Mr T Watts and the development officer Dr D Bailey.

EVENTS...

January 10
"Technicians - Engineering the Future" - a one day conference on technician training and education to be chaired by Sir Monty Finniston at Education for Industrial Society, Robert Hyde House, 48 Bryanston Square, London W1. Booking forms from Henriette Walker at that address.

January 17
A regional training day on the 1981 Education Act will be held jointly by the Education's Legal Centre and the Spastics Society for anyone concerned with the workings of the new law, at St David's Hall, Working Street, Cardiff CF1 2SH. Details from the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

Science Education - People and Prosperity, a one-day British Association symposium to be held at the Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre, New Burlington Place, London W1. Chairman Professor M Frazer; speakers Mr S MacLure, Mr E Bolton, Professor T Stonier and Dr P Kirby. Details from the Symposium Secretary, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB. Tel: 01-734 6010.

January 21
One-day seminar held by the British Youth

Council on Youth Unemployment at County Hall, London. Details from Liam Hargaden, British Youth Council, 57 Chilton Street, London NW1 1HU. Tel: 01-387 7559.

Rock School - workshops to encourage teachers to explore the uses of rock music in the classroom will be held at the Paddington Teachers Centre, Liverpool on January 19; the Bilston Sixth Form Centre, Wolverhampton on January 24; Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham on January 25; Bradford and Wakeley Community College on January 27; University of Bristol Union Building, Bristol on February 7; Middlesbrough Teachers' Centre, Middlesbrough on February 13; and Homerton College, Cambridge on February 14. Details from the Organizer, TSB Rock School Competition, The Syson Publishing Company, FREEPOST, Richmond, Surrey TW105BR. Tel: 01-940 9577.



The Genius of Venice: Italian Old Master paintings of the sixteenth century at the Royal Academy until March 11. Pre-booking facilities are available for school parties. Details from the Registrar, Genius of Venice School Booking, The Royal Academy, Piccadilly, London W1, enclosing s.a.e.

Background material for teachers and students, including a middle school pack, is now available. A conference for sixth-formers will be held on January 25, and for art colleges and universities on February 3 in the General Assembly Room. Details from the Education Office at the Royal Academy.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS...

Practical Administration and Public Administration two volumes about the civil service published by the Cabinet Office to help teachers and tutors of BEC and TEC public administration courses. The first sets out situations and problems of relevance to working life in the civil service, the second contains case studies. Each costs £15 and is available from booksellers or HMSO.

The Careers and Occupational Information Centres has added seven new titles to its 'Working in' series: *Hairdressing, the Police, Shops, Work with Animals, Arts and Crafts, Children's Legal Centre, and the Spastics Society*. Each book takes the form of a series of profiles of job-holders and includes personal and educational requirements, job descriptions, career prospects, advantages and disadvantages. Single copies cost 95p each plus 25p postage from Manpower Services Commission, Papworth Industries, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB3 8RG. Orders over £10 are obtainable from COIC, MSC, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ.

Teaching in Primary Schools - a booklet aimed at encouraging sixth-formers to consider careers as primary teachers has been reprinted by the Department of Education and Science. Available free from local authorities, or the OES, Room 2/11, Elzabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH.

Buying Books, a practical guide to book selection for children's and schools libraries from the Library Association Youth Libraries Group, price £2.80 (including postage). From Meggie Norwood, YLG, Central Children's Library, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ. Please make cheques payable to Library Association Youth Libraries Group.

COMPETITIONS...

The Council for Education in World Citizenship announces The Robins Memorial Prize of £100 in book tokens or towards travel for those wishing to attend the CEWC annual conference, for the school which has made the most effective contribution to education for international understanding during 1983. Entries may take any form, for example, essays involving world or modern studies, involvement in Unesco-associated school projects, exhibition or dramatic presentation on an international theme, voluntary service abroad - or at home in an inter-racial or international community, etc. Application forms to be returned by January 1 are available from CEWC, 19/21 Tudor Street, London EC4V 1DJ. Tel: 01-353 3353.

The CEWC and Minority Rights Group have launched a new competition to encourage interest in human rights issues. There are three age groups: up to 12 years, 13-15 and 16-18. £50 book tokens will be awarded in each category and a first prize of £100 for the best overall entry. Candidates are asked to submit a front page for a newspaper approximately 15" x 20" (38cm x 50cm) depicting human rights denied or secured in Britain or overseas. Closing date February 3. Details of the competition from CEWC (address above).

Children of the mother of invention

This year's winners of The Design Council's schools competition show off the ingenious devices that earned them a congratulatory handshake from HRH Princess Alexandra and cheques for up to £250. Thorn EMI, the sponsors, also presented a £200 prize to the winners' schools.



Safe as houses... of Parliament. Andrew Chinn, 18, Wootton Upper School, Bedford, and his automatic window lock.



Bottle Bank? Lorna Griffiths and Jonathan Powell, both 15, Cynffig Comprehensive, Mid Glamorgan, demonstrate their anti-theft milk holder.

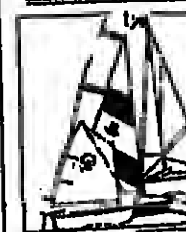


Suzanna Robinson, 19, Heber County High, Malpas, Cheshire: floated the idea of an adjustable footrest for canoes.

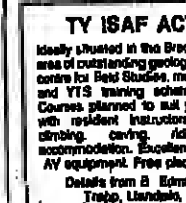


Jonathan Groves, 18, Trent College, Long Eaton: filling a hole in the market with his portable dentist's instrument kit.

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Business, pleasure and raised eyebrows

"Stoke Rochford? That's the people's country home, isn't it?" said a colleague on hearing I was travelling north to visit the National Union of Teachers' residential centre in Lincolnshire.

In truth, it is an apt description for the 28-acre site, which was formerly a teacher training centre run by Lincolnshire County Council - was prompted by feelings within the union that it should save on the spending of between £80,000 and £90,000 on hotel bills while training its members.

Now the centre is being subsidised to the tune of £60,000 a year by the NUT - but a separate company has been set up to run it and the deficit has been reduced from £184,000 a year when the union first purchased it.

This has been achieved by running the centre on a commercial basis - mixing NUT courses with hiring the centre out to other trade unions and people from all walks of life who want to run conferences or simply hold their dinner dances there.

The centre's policy provides a wide variety of entertainment at Stoke Rochford, too - so much so that in any given weekend you could rub shoulders with a group of elderly paratroopers reminiscing about how they plotted the battle of Arnhem in Stoke Rochford's great hall during the Second World War, listen to cricketer Freddie Trueman or showjumper Harvey Smith entertaining guests from around the country with an after-dinner speech, or discuss the plight of Britain's middle schools with fellow NUT delegates. Cricket club dinner dances, society weddings and anniversary seminars are also features of the centre.

Its sporting facilities - which include squash courts, a soon-to-be-opened jacuzzi and an open-air swimming pool - are available to the public. Nestling as it does, just five miles from Grimsby, the town once voted in a survey as 'the most boring in the country' on account of the lack of entertainment venues, it has provided a much needed boost to local leisure facilities.

However, some NUT members do not believe their union should be playing host to chamber of commerce discos, boxing tournaments and celebrity dinners with guests such as those described and others like Jimmy Hill, Sebastian Coe and Lawrie McMenemy.

They were even more incensed when one businessman's group hired a stripper to entertain their guests. Some NUT members also raised eyebrows when they heard that their section of the union's annual education conference could not be held at

Richard Garner visits Stoke Rochford, the country pile owned by the NUT and a source of controversy and income

Stoke Rochford next year because of a prior booking by another union.

Mr Peter Robinson, the director of the centre, says that the centre works on the basis that the NUT can use the centre for about 40 per cent of the time and other unions and outside organizations for the remaining 60 per cent.

He said there were no rules barring any organization from using the centre, although he added: "If the National Front wanted to book it, I'd have to take advice. My instinctive reaction would be to say 'no' to that kind of institution and probably they wouldn't want to come."

Only one organization has so far been barred from using the centre - a local division of the National Association of Head Teachers who wanted to book it for a dinner dance. "I don't see why NUT members should provide subsidy for members of another teachers' organization," he said.

So far none of the other teachers' organizations has sought to book it. The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, the country's second largest teachers' union, has its own education centre at Rednal - in the county of Hereford and Worcester.

"We've had Labour, Conservative and Liberals booking it," said Robinson. "If Rank and File (an ultra-left



Charles (in the balcony) wanted it, they could probably have it."

Mr Robinson was in charge of the union's training department when the union bought the centre and was one of the prime movers - along with the NUT's deputy general secretary, Mr Doug McAvoy, who is now company secretary to the Stoke Rochford Board of Management - in persuading the NUT to stick its neck out and purchase the lease.

It was owned by the McCorquodale family - whose members include novelist Barbara Cartland and Lady Sarnb McCorquodale, who lives in Stoke Rochford, and whose sister just happens to be married to Prince Charles. They still retain the freehold and own much of the land around the centre.

Both Mr McAvoy and Mr Robinson believe the purchase has been a good investment. "We could sell it new for six times the amount of money we paid for it," said Mr Robinson. "We would have no difficulty at all."

He also points out that it would now be much more costly than £80,000 or £90,000 to continue to put NUT mem-

bers up in hotels while they were on their training courses.

The centre has 125 bedrooms - in traditional college style although the management's next venture will be to put showers and toilets in every one. It had been run as a local authority institution for several years and was "decoratively very dull," said Mr Robinson.

Some of the splendour of its bygone times has been restored with the arrival of the NUT and the union is still adding to the facilities there. Squash courts were opened earlier this year - and the jacuzzi and sauna are about to come into use.

In addition, the centre has a conference hall and a theatre - which is used by a local amateur dramatic group five times a year for week-long productions. It seats 104 people.

The conference centre proved a godsend to the NUT when it first purchased the site. At the time, the Department of Environment was looking for a suitable venue for the controversial planning inquiry into whether the National Coal Board should be allowed to mine in a local beauty spot, the Vale of Belvoir.

Stoke Rochford was chosen - and a planning inquiry lasting 160 days and bringing in revenue worth £75,000 to the centre opened as lawyers, journalists and demonstrators took over the place (some of them requiring overnight accommodation).

More than 1,000 people were present at the inquiry, with 500 of them cramming into the hall - and 300, mainly protestors, crowding around outside and having the proceedings relayed to them on a loudspeaker.

It is worth noting that the centre's first financial year, its first headache

was the annual reunion of the second battalion of paratroopers. They had been based at Stoke Rochford during the war - where they planned the battle of Arnhem.

For Mr Robinson, who trained as a teacher before becoming a full-time union official, it marked rather a departure from his usual working day to be suddenly faced with the responsibility of looking after 200 elderly paratroopers for the weekend.

The paratroopers come back year after year - and next year will be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the battle of Arnhem. With the centre's close links with Princess Diana's family, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that Royalty will be in evidence then.

The only real threat to the centre's growth of importance in trade union education is the fact that the TUC is opening its own trade union education centre on the site of the former Homsey College of Art in North London next year.

The NUT has consistently opposed the plan - although not because it believes the centre will rival its own but because it feels it is in the wrong place to attract trade union courses.

Said Mr Robinson: "There is no absolute need for the trade union movement to have its own education centre but our contention is that Homsey is (a) too expensive and (b) in the wrong place."

The TUC had the chance to buy a college of education in Rugby which we thought would have been more suitable. The Homsey site is infeasible."

Stoke Rochford has built up quite an impressive list of clients amongst other trade unions - and many of them have booked the place for courses which will take place after the TUC's own centre will have opened its doors.

Unions using the centre include the Transport and General Workers' Union, which has just decided to change the venue for its four-week summer school from the Royal College of Agriculture in Cirencester to Stoke Rochford, the Union of Communication Workers, the Confederation of Health Service Employees and the Civil and Public Services Association.

If the centre did start to go into the black with its finances, any profit made would be ploughed back into the union and Mr Robinson is hoping to continue to make inroads into the centre's deficit.

"You can't afford to run Stoke Rochford as a centre purely and simply for the NUT," he said. "We couldn't afford the running costs - it would be a loss in the region of £750,000 and £800,000 a year. You need the commercial input."



Between speeches... delegates to an NUT conference

OVERSEAS

Why pupils rioted and left school

SOUTH AFRICA

Hilary Wilce hears London sixth-formers given an anti-apartheid message

The experience of being a black schoolchild in South Africa was vividly conveyed to London sixth-formers recently - along with pleas for them to support all trade and sporting boycotts of the country.

Two young speakers told an inner London Education Authority conference on apartheid of their experience of growing up in South Africa and Namibia, speaking with bitterness about a system which forced their mothers to spend all day looking after white children, while they were left to run around the streets.

Ms Bience Gwanas, of the South West African People's Organisation, told the 150 sixth-formers that she was one of 11 children who had grown up in a four-bedroom house without electricity, where any studying had to be done by candlelight.

When she completed school and wanted to continue her studies, "I had to see a white inspector who told me that as a black I didn't have the intelligence of a white, to study law." The apartheid system of education did not offer wider opportunities for black students, but was designed to create subordinate human beings, she said. That was why, when the Soweto

schoolchildren riots erupted in 1976, "students in Namibia also dropped their pens and books and said it is better not to go to school, than to go to school and be a black slave."

Now there were 4,000 young people exiled in Angola who were trying to educate themselves, Ms Gwanas said. "If they have a pencil, they save it, they hang on to it, because they want to learn in real and write."

Education was the right of all the people in the audience, she said, "but it is a privilege for a black to be educated in my country."

Mr Freedom Mkwanzali, of the African National Congress, told the conference that he had taken part in the Soweto demonstration at which the police had first opened fire on unarmed schoolchildren. "It was a lesson to us that we were growing up under a system that breeds and feeds our violence."

Demonstrations had erupted in Soweto because the government had decided to impose Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools. Yet the language was "mish-mash", without any international dimension. "We knew that if we were educated in that language we would only be useful within the boundaries of South Africa."

His consciousness of apartheid had grown because his family, which included both so-called coloured members and blacks, had been split by it. It was a society where "the child grows away from the mother, the mother cannot live with the father - and the



Bience Gwanas



Freedom Mkwanzali

father dies in the mines," he said.

Both speakers called for support for the boycott policies, and for liberation organizations fighting apartheid, and this call was echoed by Mr Chris Laidlaw, the former New Zealand rugby captain and assistant director of the office of the Commonwealth secretary-general, who told the sixth-formers they should work in their schools to spread the word about the need to prevent the English team from going to South Africa next year.

The policy of sporting boycott was at the crossroads, he said. "South Africa is determined to spend huge amounts of money on getting players to go to the country. Millions and millions of dollars are available. But if they begin to succeed the sporting boycott will be in big trouble."

"If any of you know cricket or rugby players - in your schools or outside - you must try and explain to them the realities of apartheid."

The conference was organized by the International Defence and Aid Fund and the ILCA's multi-cultural inspector, Mr Mike Hussey, who said he had not considered inviting speakers from the South African Government to balance the anti-apartheid speakers because the aim of the conference was to put over the experience of apartheid, not to debate the regime's policies.

Commonwealth governments are to set up a distance education programme for South Africa refugees, along the lines of a programme already running

for Namibians in exile.

It will start next year with English, maths and agriculture courses in four refugee camps in Tanzania, expanding later to include other areas of study and other front-line African countries.

The decision was ratified by Commonwealth heads of government at their recent meeting in New Delhi, and governments are now being asked to make contributions towards the £50,000 needed to start the programme.

The scheme is intended to provide basic education for students cut off from normal life, to combat the enforced idleness of camp life, and to provide skills for their country's future.

Namibian refugees, in exile in Zambia and Angola, are already studying maths and English under a low-cost distance teaching scheme using cheap workbooks, cassettes and group teaching. The cost per student is estimated at £40.

The cost of educating South African refugees is expected to be under £100 a head. Much support will come from the Tanzanian Government which will set up an extension unit. This in turn will work closely with the country's Institute of Education.

However, both the Namibian and South African programmes are small compared with the education help extended to many thousands of Zimbabwean refugees by the Commonwealth before their country achieved independence.

People's pure science

Pupils in an Independent Namibia will have to study a rigorous programme of pure science, under education plans now being formulated by the South West African People's Organisation. "They will have physics as physics, chemistry as chemistry, biology as biology, not any of this integrated science," Mr Nahas Angula, the education secretary in SWAPO, told a London conference last week.

He acknowledged that such a policy could lead to problems in maintaining standards of pure science while trying also to offer appropriate and interesting courses, but said he hoped that pre-vocational courses would offer one way of translating theory into practice.

SWAPO policy is that all pupils will get some skill training as part of their basic education. But this, too, could present problems, Mr Angula acknowledged.

"The present system of bantu education stresses manual work, to make people the servants of the colonialists. We are obviously going to have problems when we go back and ask people to do that all over again. Education in itself is not enough. There must be a political orientation. People must know why they are doing things."

On language, SWAPO had decided to use English as the official form of communication and teaching. Children in the refugee camps came from so many different language groups that it seemed best "to put every child at a disadvantage".

But after Independence, children would also learn the basics of their mother tongue during their first years of school, even though this meant a danger of reproducing, in urban areas, the racially fragmented social system created by South Africa.

SWAPO runs primary and secondary schooling, and a variety of literacy schemes, for thousands of refugees in camps in Zambia and Angola, and arranges for students to go abroad for further education and training.

There are about 150 Namibians studying in the United Kingdom under scholarships of various kinds. Some, at the Selly Oak College in Birmingham, and at Moray House, in Edinburgh, are preparing for teacher training. Others are following business studies courses, or studying fisheries administration.

Mr Angula told the annual conference of the World University Service UK that there was always a danger that students might not want to return, and that was their privilege. "But we say that scholarships given to us are given to the Namibian people. If you take something, then you must give something back. . . . Some of our fighters, out in the bush, have doctorate degrees. They would have preferred to hang their bare, in beaten bodies, but they did not."

A forthcoming study of education in Namibia is expected to identify central planning, teacher training and curriculum development as priorities in the post-independence period.

over girls - each applicant will be considered on the strength of the GCE A level results.

Neither will the relaxation lead to a lowering of standards. Students who fail their second language are admitted provisionally. Even if they are first-class honours material, they will only be awarded their degree on condition that they obtain the minimum second language requirement before they leave the university, he said.

To help them get the minimum grade, the university will conduct intensive language classes during the long vacation. They can then sit for a special examination at the end of each year - and have as many attempts as necessary - to satisfy the language requirement. A fail would mean forfeiting the degree.

Primary gets priority at FE's expense

IRISH REPUBLIC

John Walsh on proposed measures for changing the system

Disadvantaged pupils, especially in primary schools, will be given priority in the Government's four-year action programme on education. But further and higher education will be badly hit.

The programme for a radical shake-up in Irish education is the result of several months of deliberation by the Education Minister, Mrs Gemma Hussey, and a team of her senior officials. Details of the main recommendations, along with a confidential memorandum from Mrs Hussey to the cabinet, have been published in the Irish Independent newspaper.

Among the many measures proposed are:

- Allocation of specific resources to disadvantaged pupils;
- Setting up of a national parents' council;
- Strategies to eliminate sexism in education;
- Computerization of examinations;
- Support for multi-denominational primary schools where requested;
- Encouragement of coeducation in new primary schools;
- Greater flexibility to secondary schools to introduce alternative curricula.

Oral exams in 1986;

Religious studies as a leaving certificate examination subject;

Funding is being sought from the EC for the provision of expanded training courses under "social guarantee" provisions.

It is the proposals for the third level

which have caused the biggest furor. The section starts off by stating that the Government intends to maintain the present participation rates in this area - about 20 per cent of the relevant age group. But to do so will mean an additional 40 per cent of student places by the end of this decade. Mrs Hussey suggests that this can be achieved at less than full incremental costs.

The most controversial measure proposed is the introduction of a loans scheme. This apparently would be accompanied by substantially higher tuition fees for all students.

The programme says that in order to achieve a greater throughput of students without incurring major capital costs, the feasibility of redesigning courses on the basis of a four-term academic year should be examined.

The question of whether four-year courses can be reduced to three years will also be examined.

Reduction of staff/student contact hours will be considered with a view to allowing for increased student numbers to be catered for without corresponding staff increases. It is thought that the efficiency of separating courses in regional technical colleges which have up to 30 hours a week of classroom teaching.

In her memorandum to the Cabinet, Mrs Hussey asks for increased funds to launch her programme. The money would be used for increased grants for primary and secondary schools, for in-service training, free books for needy pupils, and the provision of micros in secondary schools.

After 1984, she wants additional funds to continue special support schemes for the disadvantaged, in-service training, curriculum reform and alternative career oriented programmes in secondary schools.

The universal university debate

FRANCE

Mary Follain looks at the reform that has split academics

French academics have split into bitterly warring factions over the long-awaited university reform which has begun its second reading in the National Assembly.

Various teachers' unions and newly-formed associations of university professors are vying with each other to bring pressure to bear on the Government. Fifty-five eminent academics, some of the so-called "mandarins" of French higher education - were reported to have succeeded recently in persuading President Mitterrand that the reform would have disastrous consequences.

Their success was countered by a petition in support of the reform presented by an extreme left-wing union and signed by 1,700 academics.

The first reading of the socialist government's Bill ended last May after six months of filibustering by the Opposition, who suggested a record 2,150 amendments. Some university teachers joined their students in spring demonstrations against the projected reforms, but the vast majority took little notice.

They were jolted out of their indifference by a decree published in September which stipulated the number of hours expected of university teachers for the academic year. This is seen by many as a major political blunder which antagonized even those in favour of the reform, coming as it did just after an inquiry into the light teaching schedules of some professors.

"We all felt insulted," said Madame Colette Deaubé, lecturer in Paris university. "I personally have been concerned for a long time. The main ideas behind the reform are generous but they are Utopian because they take no account of the realities of everyday life in our faculties." Her view was shared by many university teachers - of all political sympathies - who find the

reform vague, confused and contradictory.

The Government is committed to a policy of greater democracy in education, and it is a long-standing tradition that the universities must be open to every holder of the baccalaureat (the French equivalent to A levels).

Universities have already increased their intake this year and there are fears of a return to conditions before May 1968, when students sat or stood on the stairs listening to lectures relayed through loudspeakers.

Although there are many advocates of selective entry, it is politically unacceptable. Instead, more than 50 per cent of students find out for themselves during the first two years of a degree course that university studies are not for them.

Despite the lack of selection, the reform recommends that students should be guided in their choice of subjects during those first two years and that the examination which most French students normally take at that point should provide them with some kind of professional qualification.

"What form the exam will take is an open question," said M. Georges Bas, professor of British drama at the Sorbonne. "And how can we hope to train a high proportion of students successfully for it if we cannot select suitable students in the first place?"

If the reform becomes law, access to the final year of a degree course will be selective and some form of professional training may have to be provided. Here as elsewhere the text is often described as "woolly" and "far too vague".

Other aspects of the proposed reform which academics find equally worrying concern the universities and its effect on their own careers. Some - particularly the "mandarins" - are afraid that too much power will be given to the unions in all these areas.



Luls Garcia

Militant union elects first moderate leader

AUSTRALIA

Luls Garcia on the row looming inside the teachers' federation

The 60,000 members of the New South Wales Teachers' Federation, the largest and most powerful teacher union in Australia, have elected a moderate as their president for the next two years.

Mr Iven Pagett, aged 30, and a prominent right-wing member of the Australian Labor Party, defeated the incumbent, Mr Max Taylor, aged 37, a hard left winger, by a comfortable margin of about 2,000 votes.

The federation has always been a leader of the left in the trade union movement here, and has always elected militant leaders, so that Mr Taylor's defeat came as something of a shock to his colleagues.

Mr Taylor was identified closely with all of the federation's campaigns opposing the education policies of the NSW Labor government, including a recent spate of one-day strikes in support of increased funding for primary schools.

It is believed that these campaigns may have cost him the votes of many teachers who favoured a much less militant stance by their union. Mr Pagett campaigned on the theme of winning back the public's respect for the teaching profession, which he considered had been lost by the activities of the federation in recent years.

During the election campaign, he strongly attacked Mr Taylor as "an inflexible militant" who had gone a long way in destroying the professional standing of the teachers in the community.

He said that Mr Taylor's leadership had been marked by strikes, demonstrations and occupations, which had not been effective.

After the election, Mr Pagett said: "The way I deal with the government and the educational authorities will be more reasonable, I hope, but if the government thinks it's going to get an essay run from us, it is in for a shock. I think we are going to get more out of the Government than Max Taylor did. We are going to be a lot harder to brush aside as being unreasonable and militant."

But, when Mr Pagett takes over the presidency officially on January 31 next year, he will face several obstacles - all of them from within the federation. To start with, he will face a new federal council, the union's policy-making body.

The council has 350 members directly elected by all teachers every two years, but never on the same year as the presidential election. The council is currently controlled by a coalition of left-wing forces, directly opposed on many issues to the view and politics of Mr Pagett.

Members of the council have already made it clear that they will find it very difficult to work alongside Mr Pagett, who, for example, has strong views on the politically sensitive issue of state assistance to private schools. He believes that the federation's policy on the issue (calling for the abolition of all forms of government financial aid to the private sector) is "unrealistic".

This is not the kind of view which is likely to endear him to the union's staunchly anti-state aid council.

Mr Pagett will also be hampered by his relative inexperience in union affairs. As one council member said: "Mr Pagett and his team are so inexperienced that they quickly find themselves rolled on almost any issue of importance."

Mr Pagett's first major confrontation with the council is likely to be over proposed government changes to the complex process by which teachers are promoted.

The government is considering an overhaul of the process to remove what it sees as discriminatory practices against married women teachers in metropolitan areas. The proposals have met with strong opposition, not least from senior male bureaucrats, and Mr Pagett promised during his campaign to reverse any changes if elected. Mr Pagett has also been accused of having his election campaign "bank-rolled" by an extreme right wing organization, the National Civic Council (NCC), to the tune of about \$6,000 (£3,500), an allegation his supporters have strongly denied.

Telecon link to beat isolation

A "teleconferencing" network has been set up in the Northern Territory to bring together school teachers hundreds of kilometres apart, Geoff Maslin writes.

Teachers in outlying schools have been put in touch with colleagues in Darwin via the telephone line. A jointly-funded commonwealth-territory project has enabled 10 Hypercom line conference telephones to be connected.

This enables a three-way conference with people in three separate locations, even three different countries, at the flick of a switch.

A maximum of 10 locations can be bridged by Telecom in a single teleconference. Various networks involved fewer locations can be set up as the need arises.

The teleconferencing project is being conducted by Dr Norman Brown and Mrs P. Smith of the research and planning section in the territory's department of education, to combat teacher's professional isolation.

Exam rule changed to help boys

by a special correspondent

SINGAPORE

Singapore's only university has relaxed its strict second language ruling so that its male graduate population may increase.

In the past two years more boys than girls have been kept out of the university because they failed their second language examinations - usually Mandarin. Girls seem to have fewer problems coping with the subject, managing to get the minimum grade in their GCE A level examinations.

Since the ruling was imposed in 1981, an estimated 300 "bright but weak in second language" boys have been deprived of a place. Potential mathematicians, engineers and phys-

cists - many with distinctions in their GCE A level exams but a fall in Mandarin - were turned away. Those with wealthy parents were sent abroad - to the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and Canada. Less fortunate boys were forced to join technical colleges or the labour market.

Now the university has decided to ease this ruling essentially "to redress this imbalance between male and female undergraduates".

Ironically, this turnabout in policy has little to do with language abilities. In fact, it is more directly linked to the Republic's recent marriage debate in which the government voiced concern over the increasing number of unmarried women graduates.

University administrators admitted

if the ruling continued unchanged they would be forced to take in more girls than boys. And as its Vice-Chancellor Professor Lim Pin puts it: "The problem of unmarried women graduates would be aggravated."

As it is, more women graduates are remaining single because men graduates are marrying less educated girls - a worrying trend indeed for the Republic's policy makers who firmly believe that not only should women graduates get married, they should also have children. So preoccupied are they with the problem that they are now contemplating computerized matchmaking services.

Still, Professor Lim Pin insists that it's "brains - not sex" that matter when admitting students for undergraduate studies. Boys will not get preference

over girls - each applicant will be considered on the strength of the GCE A level results.

Neither will the relaxation lead to a lowering of standards. Students who fail their second language are admitted provisionally. Even if they are first-class honours material, they will only be awarded their degree on condition that they obtain the minimum second language requirement before they leave the university, he said.

To help them get the minimum grade, the university will conduct intensive language classes during the long vacation. They can then sit for a special examination at the end of each year - and have as many attempts as necessary - to satisfy the language requirement. A fail would mean forfeiting the degree.

Processing new technology

SOVIET UNION

Kenneth Shaw reports on the urgent need for computer specialists

Training teachers to specialize in computer science and the application of micro-technology are seen as the most urgent priorities in Soviet secondary special education, according to a recent official report.

Regional ministries have been trying to implement training programmes for computer teaching in all special schools, which cover microprocessors and microcomputers. The programme specifies 36 hours of instruction per week and covers 10 topics examining the design and functioning of processors and the building of computers based on microchips.

New, high-priority plans have been drawn up for increasing the qualifications of teachers who are to train the schoolteachers.

Mr V G Shipunov, head of the teaching methods division for special

secondary education of the USSR, says that certain critical areas have been neglected. The successful mastery of the principles of microelectronics now requires additional work to be done in teaching programmes, textbooks and methodological concepts for school instruction in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology.

"To do all this," Mr Shipunov asserts, "it is important not only to select competent specialists, but to train, morally and professionally, the entire collective of lecturers in technical colleges."

Three levels of retraining for lecturers have now been arranged. Level one will cover lecturers in the humanities who will teach 30 hours of the theory and practice of computer technology. Levels 2 and 3 will deal with computer techniques and programming. In courses lasting 40 and 100 hours. Syllabuses have already been confirmed.

Existing computer training courses in colleges are to be modified and updated, Mr Shipunov states. Comput-

ers are to be used not only as a means of instruction but also as a means of introducing into the system of controlling the learning processes.

The Soviets claim that their experience in the most advanced teams shows that the use of electronic computers within the frameworks of traditional instruction has not always yielded tangible results.

The use of computers in business games and in setting up economic models is in vogue, as is the automatic processing of large quantities of business data in order to boost the efficiency of education and living standards closer to real production conditions.

Many pupils in the USSR are now expected to recede calculations.

Inheriting incompetence

CHINA

The quality of teaching in China is so low that less than a third of primary school children reach the required standard at graduation, according to the *Guangming Daily*.

The official newspaper, which caters for intellectuals and professionals, says in a front page commentary that investigations have shown that, in the country as a whole, the rate for qualified primary school-leavers is only 30 per cent, while in Gansu and Ningxia provinces in central China, it is as low as 20 per cent. "The most important reason for this is the poor standard of the teachers," says the paper.

It attributes the problem to the 10-year Cultural Revolution, which started in 1966, when middle school education was "indiscriminately popularized", while there was still scant provision of primary education. Many qualified primary school teachers were sent to teach in junior middle schools, whose teachers in turn

went to senior middle schools. The resulting shortage of primary teachers was filled by untrained staff.

Teachers throughout primary and secondary education were therefore unqualified for their posts and now, says the *Guangming Daily*, the problem is becoming worse as the older, better experienced teachers - "the backbone of the schools" - are retiring.

And because of the Chinese tradition of job inheritance, whereby parents hand on their jobs to their children regardless of their suitability, the rate of unqualified teachers is greatly increasing, says the paper.

The commentary quotes statistics showing that of China's eight million teachers, 60 per cent of senior middle school teachers, 82 per cent of junior middle school teachers and 45 per cent of primary school teachers have inadequate educational qualifications. One third of all teachers fall below the required standard of practical teaching ability, it says.

Jane Marshall

LETTERS

Blowing the final whistle on school sports fixtures

Sir - How interesting that Mr Palmer's comments as a headteacher, and chairman of the National Council for School Sports, should appear to contradict Mr Petherick's comments as general secretary of the Physical Education Association when considering the demise of inter-school sports fixtures (TES, December 2).

Sadly, Mr Palmer's anti-motion stance misses the point so well highlighted by Mr Petherick, that "teachers were having to rethink their curriculum priorities" - not in response to how they can keep on propping up the national school sports associations, but that, in long last, PE teachers in company with other subject areas, should consider what was best for the majority of pupils and not a pumped few.

Further, Mr Palmer's interest in minority groups would seem to be at odds with the stand recently taken by the ESFA - of which he is a past president - against the establishment of a sports school for talented school-boy soccer players.

By comparison, perhaps I could illustrate why I think our well intentioned, often press-ganged, group of

non-PE teachers resent turning out weekly to supervise inter-school fixtures, especially soccer. Those boys reluctant to play for a school team full of howl on the following day with their Sunday league club will play with matching strip, personalized track-suits, a sponsored ball, refreshments at half-time, a "trainer" in attendance, a referee in full regalia and the prospect of a weekly "man of the match" award. Of course, this theatre of competitive sport will be accompanied by up to 80 or 100 parents paying for the blood of their son's opponent.

Mr Palmer, from his remarks to the CCPI conference, presumably accepts these aspects of competition as "human nature" (and by inference suggests should be continued).

No, anything that PE teachers can do to assess the value of their work within curricular time must be infinitely preferable to the overly competitive nature of games so clearly in evidence in our society.

TONY PEERS
Head of Physical Education Faculty
Rowlandson School
Sheffield

Team status

Sir - With reference to the report on the conference of the Central Council of Physical Recreation (TES, December 2), the articles throw up a number of interesting points, not least "the growing threat to school fixtures".

As a school sports teacher, I have a mixed reaction to the article. I am not sure that the article is as balanced as it seems. It is true that many pupils in sporting activities by inter-school tournaments, and other such similar areas. We currently run both school teams and tournaments, but this is proving to be a drain both on resources and the goodwill of staff. If

Teachers are a rarity! What other profession would give their own time, unpaid and often without expenses, to enrich the experiences of their pupils? It would surely be better to have no school teams, then return to the dark ages of moral blackmail, as suggested by Mr Palmer, where staff who run



school teams were to be given a lower priority, then I suspect that the ego of many physical education teachers would suffer, and maybe it is this that stands in the way of innovation in the school curriculum with regard to physical education.

However, school teams will always exist as there are still teachers, content to play for a while.

JOHN ALFORD
Head of Boys PE
Park View School
Alum Rock
Birmingham

Chance to play

Sir - Having read with interest and not a little concern the articles about the expected erosion of inter-school fixtures (TES, December 2 and 9) it seems to me that many of the arguments on both sides can be catered for with a little careful planning by the PE staff in the school.

If we are to follow the educational theorists on the teaching of games, then we must accept that the understanding of "the game" and its principles is of paramount importance to the pupil. How then can we develop this and the other admirable qualities mentioned by Roy French without giving the pupils the chance to experience the playing of the game in its ultimate state, against another school's team?

Moreover, why should we restrict this experience to the relatively small number of pupils who traditionally are chosen to represent their school? In a recent pilot scheme my own school and a neighbouring comprehensive involved every boy in a particular year group who wanted to represent their school at rugby (some 90 per cent).

Playing with reduced numbers in the teams and with slightly modified rules, rugby pitches sprouted like mushrooms to offer the boys the experiences and rewards of competing against another school. Many non-PE staff were enthusiastic helpers. Having been released from the burden of arranging fixtures and pitches, picking teams etc, they could enjoy being involved in the more rewarding aspects of taking school teams - spoon-fed perhaps, but at least they were there!

It was gratifying to see boys (and their parents) who would otherwise never represent the school, being involved. A similar scheme involving the girls in their sports has fired our department with enthusiasm to develop these tentative steps, at least with our younger children in the first instance. Undoubtedly we have a long way to go, and many important questions to answer, but we feel they are steps in the right direction.

ALAN MOULD
Head of PE
Archbishop Mostyn RC High School
Caeau Lane
Wenvoe
Cardiff

Striking effect

Sir - I do not think Peter Dawson (TES, December 2) should be allowed to get away with dismissing important issues as "few glib sentences".

Mr Dawson's correct thinking that I recently referred to the aftermath of bitterness which can follow industrial action by teachers' unions, was talking to a conference of deputy heads and emphasizing their particular role as intermediaries between heads and their teaching staff.

Deputies have the unenviable role of representing their heads' policy decisions to their colleagues and, at the same time, ensuring that the teaching staff's interests and rights are represented. If need be, defended to the head. During times of dispute that task, firmly but sensitively discharged, is the essential guarantee that normal professional service is resumed as soon as possible.

Whatever my personal feelings about the appropriateness of teachers taking industrial action in principle or in specific sets of circumstances, unlike Mr Dawson, I am not self-satisfied or impertinent enough to suggest that those who disagree with me are behaving improperly.

The Assistant Masters and Mistresses' Association has members who would whatever the situation, be quite unwilling to apply sanctions. Whether I agree with them or not doesn't matter: what does matter is that my association respects their right to act according to their conscience and professional judgment and is prepared to defend their entitlement to do so.

There are other AMMA members who would defend to the last their fundamental and ultimate right to withhold their labour or withdraw their goodwill. My organization respects that view as being every bit as high principled as industrial pacifism, and defends members who hold it. It is, of course, easy to characterize this stance as ambivalent, but I am wholly unembarrassed in defending it as a fundamental tenet of any organization which believes that freedom of conscience and the right to act upon it should always be defended.

Respect for that freedom is something I extend not merely to members of my own association but to teachers who belong to other unions, even when I disagree with them. As Mr Dawson well knows, the AMMA did not "go along with the NUT and NASUWT in applying sanctions last year: as far as possible we worked normally, not agreeing with our colleagues' action but respecting their right to take it.

I would be tolerant even of Mr Dawson's principles but for two reservations. The first is that, with mercenary cant, he parades them to build up his organization's membership. The second more important reservation is that he puts his principles up for sale. His current going rate is 9 per cent, the figure he puts in the 1984 Burnham round on a "no-strike" deal.

DORRIN JONES
President
AMMA
29 Gordon Square
London WC1

Unkindest cut

Sir - Is there a sexist sub-editor at *The TES*? While we welcome Hazel Taylor's review of our recently published report *Sex-Stereotyping and the Early Years of Schooling* (Features, December 2) identifying, as she does, both the strengths and the weaknesses of our project's approach, we are concerned that only one of us seems to have written that "Once a group of teachers become alert to the issue of sex-stereotyping... while the other has disappeared. Invisible women..."

NICK MAY
JEAN RUDDUCK
Centre for Applied Research in Education
University of East Anglia
Norwich

Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible and typed on one side of the paper only. The Editor reserves the right to cut or amend them.

Outrageous attitude to free lunches

Sir - I note that Dr Muffett, chairman of the Hereford and Worcester education committee describes free meals for teachers as "obscene" (TES, November 25).

One is, of course, used to Dr Muffett making extravagant statements about many aspects of the education service, but his outrageous comments about meals for teachers cannot be allowed to go unchallenged.

Teaching is a highly demanding profession and I believe that teachers are as entitled as anybody else in society to have a break at midday. If teachers are prepared to work at midday, whether it be in terms of participating in lunchtime activities or undertaking supervision, then they are entitled to some reward. A free meal (such as it is under some local authorities) is a minimal return for the work undertaken at midday.

If the concept of a free meal offends Dr Muffett, then he ought to subscribe to the alternative and more acceptable solution, namely the payment of proper remuneration on a separate contract to those teachers who are prepared to give up part, or whole, of their midday break; or even the other alternative, time off in lieu.

I cannot for the life of me understand why employers such as Dr Muffett should expect teachers, who are paid rather inadequately anyway, to give up the whole or part of the midday break for nothing. I am afraid that it is Dr Muffett who is out of touch with reality.

D M HART
General Secretary
NAHT

5p carrot
Sir - I read with outrage and disbelief the comments of Dr David Muffett who was quoted: "I count it as obscene that, strapped for money as the county council clearly is, we should still be holding in paying out almost a quarter of a million a year for free lunches as an inducement to teachers voluntarily to take part in lunchtime activities."

I know of no employers who insist on their employees working for nothing during their lunch-break. Indeed, I can only begin to imagine the apopleptic shock of Mr Scargill, should he suggested that the miners shovel a few hundredweights of coal during their lunchtime out of sheer beneficence.

I, for one, would have no objection if the county council were to offer to pay me for working half of my official lunch hour, though I think that such an offer is rather unlikely to be forthcoming.

Surely, no one can regard the "carrot" of 45p worth of school dinner per day as excessive in return for "voluntary" lunchtime working.

Can Dr Muffett honestly state that he is prepared to undertake to work during his lunch hours for 45p worth of food?

IAN FOTHERINGHAM
4 Oak Bank
Akeley
Bridgnorth
Shropshire

Voluntary duty
Sir - After reading the headline, "Free meals attacked as 'obscene'", in David Lister's article, I thought: "Good! It's about time that was mentioned."

However, on reading the article I was shocked by its content. Many of my staff - nay all my staff - spend a great proportion of their lunch times arranging the many and varied activities that contribute to a fuller and happier curriculum at school.

It is definitely not done for the "prize" of a school meal. In fact no school meals are taken free whatever. The two reasons for this are:

haviour at breaks and between lessons. There was an air of order and respect for authority about the school.

I am amused by the naive use of the word "however" - have not the inspectors, or your writer, seen that it is not clear which of them is responsible for this? I considered the possibility that the highly desirable results described may have been achieved because of and out, as is suggested, despite the use of corporal punishment?

Edward Bamsley.
Craft teaches truths which carry over into the whole of life, it contains its own philosophical history. CDT has much to offer but it has its roots in the disciplines of science.

Mao has a natural urge to make things by hand, and children should be given the means in school to experience joy in making. Words cannot describe fully the achievement felt after making something well. Ron Corbett at least, will understand.

JEREMY E THOMAS
Head
Orchard County Secondary School
Stoke Road
Slough

Craft and truth
Sir - Susan Thomas's article "For the love of wood" (TES, October 28) was most enjoyable. When CDT came along in the late 1960s I embraced the ideas for a while, but I found teaching the subject somehow dissatisfying.

As a head now, I feel sad to think that no boy or girl will ever have the chance to receive the education through craft that I had while at school. As a youngster, I so enjoyed woodwork at grammar school that I went on to Loughborough, and there came under the influence of men like

tics - with middle class parents of academic duifers forming a chorus in the background - has foisted a cruelly mistaken vision of secondary schooling on the nation; and the chief victims have been proletarian kids herded into neighbourhood comprehensives that too often practice the cult of equality so men or parents are neglected. We need to provide parents with a real choice in schooling between various types of school - and cease shying away from the necessity of selecting able pupils as early as possible.

J H K LOCKHART
21B King's Avenue
London W5

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TALKBACK

Shepherd's Pie

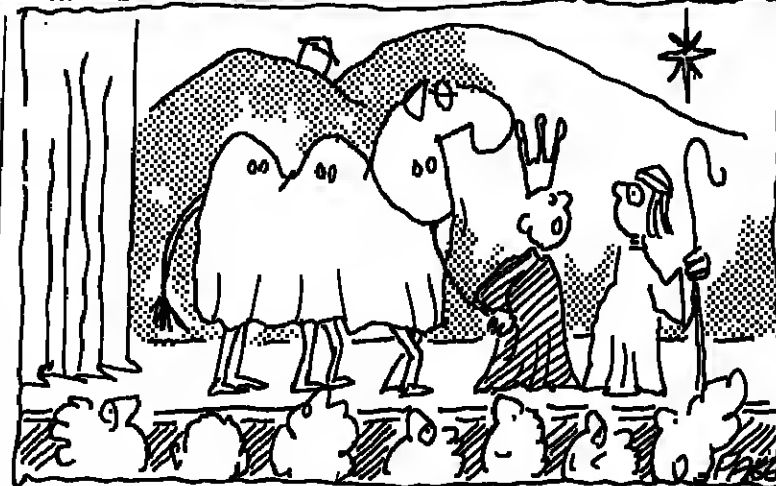
BRIAN WORTHY

Education officers do not enjoy many perks of office. However, numbered among the few must undoubtedly lie the annual invitations to primary school nativity plays. It would be unkind to infer that one is always so ready to accept such invitations weeks in advance in the confident expectation that something is bound to crop up that will prevent one attending, but that's the way it is, that often does not happen.

Of course, in the halcyon days before the Health and Safety at Work Act and all its attendant paraphernalia, it was possible to indulge in all manner of traditional, unsafe practices, such as lighting candles in front of the crib. Small, rural schools with insufficient pupils to mount large scale "productions" were much prone to this kind of thing.

One of the more ambitious efforts that I can call to mind involved the transportation into school of voluminous bales of straw and even live animals. The organic contributions of the latter in one way or another would almost certainly have precipitated an immediate walkout by the entire caretaking staff in a more urban environment.

The ceremonial lighting of the candles was carried out with a deal more enthusiasm than competence. Inevitably, the straw caught fire and the



resultant conflagration did several hundred pounds worth of damage to curtains and scenery borrowed from the village hall, before it finally succumbed to the heroic, united efforts of a combination of parents, managers and local volunteer firemen.

Needless to say, the fire drill was immaculate. The premises were evacuated with smooth efficiency; women and children first together with the animals. The only minor casualty, as I recall, being a certain stout party who inadvertently stepped in front of the goat and was severely butted for her pains. Happily there was more loss of dignity than blood and sinew. However, once every child was safely outside, curiosity triumphed over discipline. There was a mad rush to the windows to witness the proceedings inside with undisguised excitement, if not glee. I often wonder how many future arsonists were born that day.

Larger primary schools, of course, with their greater human resources can put on more epic performances with several acts and a multiple cast. Children may be natural actors, but anyone who thinks that they are devoid of temperament should talk to any average harassed primary school producer.

I remember one diminutive King Herod who insisted on appearing throughout the entire performance accompanied by a disgustingly filthy teddy bear with one arm missing. He was attended by a centurion in cardboard armour, whom I could only conclude was a displaced person from the previous Easter offering, with a spear cunningly disguised as a window pole. From time to time he flourished it triumphantly in the air. Unfortunately he did it once too often, smashed an electric light fitting and showered the chairman of the PTA with flying glass.

I have been to scores of nativity plays and have waited in patient expectancy but have yet to witness the hoary story about there being plenty of room at the inn. Children aren't that devout.

There is one thing that I have noticed over the years, and that is the vast improvement in costume. No longer does the chorus of cherubim and seraphim, or the choir of angels, or whatever it is called, appear in grubby, white nightshirts and dirty plimsols or bare feet. These days, thanks to the man-made fibres revolution and the advent of candy-striped sheets, it is far more likely to appear gloriously arrayed like so many latter-day Josephs, complete with bent, cardboard wings and gilded halos.

Schools vary in their choice of three shepherds or three wise men, including the statutory oriental with cocoa make-up, courtesy of the school meals service, according to whether they subscribe to the Luke or Matthew version of events. Sometimes, for good measure, as on this occasion, they play safe and have both, although I suspect that the real reason had something to do with the fact that "While Shepherds Watched" and "We Three Kings", had both been assiduously rehearsed.

The shepherds in their appearance first and after the customary ebullience to the doll in the cot had to quit the stage to make way for the three wise men.

"Now the shepherds are saying goodbye," announced the narrator from the wings. "They have to go . . . new."

A pre-school sibling who had been squirming about in the seat in front of me for the best part of half an hour, and had more than once given rise to the unworthy thought that there was

something to be said for the real Herod after all, suddenly demanded in a strident voice: "Mam! Where are the shepherds going?"

"Back to their sheep, dear." It was then that I made my mistake. I leaned forward and hissed, "Don't you believe it. They're going straight into a pie."

The resultant screams totally disrupted the performance for fully five minutes and were only finally alleviated by the gift of a present from the Christmas tree.

But the catalogue of disaster was not yet at an end. When the performance resumed the three wise men, consumed with impatience, made their entrance with such vigour and enthusiasm that they unceremoniously

elbowed aside the last of the departing shepherds. The latter fell off the edge of the stage with loud cries of indignant protest. These in turn occasioned cries of alarm and dire threats relating to the bodily well-being of the wise men in version from friends and relatives sitting in the audience.

The aggrieved shepherd mightily encouraged by this evidence of parental involvement, clambered back on stage to seek out his assailant with murderous intent. The wise assailant sought refuge in the rear-most ranks of the heavenly host. A terrible slanging match broke out between the parents and was won hands down by the wise man's mother in language that should have no place in any mixed primary school, much less during the season of good will. The subsequent rendering of *Silent Night* after such an exhibition was irony in itself.

Brian Worthy is deputy county education officer, Cleveland.

Of human bondage

ELIZABETH WEST

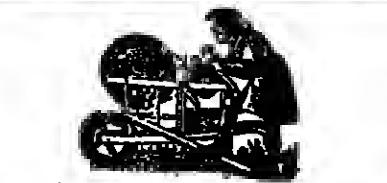
In bondage, I am female, of similar age to Caleb's granny - and my beliefs have nothing to do with bondage. Yet day in, day out, Caleb and I share a common experience - that of being confined to the school office during times of hymn practice, parties, concerts, caroling and all other educational junketings (religious or otherwise). Caleb because of his parent's convictions; I because of my job.

Each morning, at the time of the daily assembly, Caleb is joined in the office by Gareth, whose father won't permit him to be indoctrinated by all that "Christian crap" and Shaeel (whose father probably has the same view but, being Pakistani, is much too polite to so express it), and when the three first met, their exchanges of "What are you in here for?" didn't really sort the thing out for them. They were outcasts - and didn't know why.

The holding of a daily assembly is, I believe, a requirement of the Education Act. So the whole school, complete with staff, could with justification all be together in the assembly hall for 20 minutes each day. Who is supposed to look after the outcasts? What do the parents think is happening to them during this time? How, I wonder, would they react to a headteacher who said "Certainly, Mrs Blackass, your child does not have to attend assembly; perhaps you will arrange to come to the school each day between 9.00 and 9.30 am in order to look after him?"

At my school there is no problem. The children are sent to the office with their reading books "to study". At least that is what is supposed to

happen. In fact, the children soon tire of Ladybird and turn their attention to things more diverting. Gareth likes to whizz round and round upon my typing stool and Shaeel makes for the lost property box where there is always an assortment of model cars, one or two Darth Vaders or Luke Skywalker, bits of Lego and marbles which keep him quiet for the required 20 minutes. Caleb, being of a more solemn turn of



AXEGRINDER

At this point in the educational calendar, the Christmas season, primary schools, Harvest, Diwali, Hallowe'en, Guy Fawkes have come and gone . . . and finally the big one.

Even at our favoured primary school, socially and educationally on the right side of the tracks, they have had enough of tinsel, baubles, cards, carols and the Nativity play. Gone are the tattered sheets for wrapping up shepherds ("Parents, help! We need lots of clothes and sharp tools for the infants' play, and can anybody lend us a synthesizer?"). Gone too are the tattered angels' wings that threatened to snag each passing pupil, and gone (almost) is the smell of the Marvin and Cow Gum that held it all together.

The parents too have come, flashed their cameras at poignant moments, and gone. Only a trace of the bolocaust remains. A thin deposit of "glitter" and spray-snow seems to have got everywhere, and sharp tools are still exchange over the disappearance from the stockroom of the one and only gold spray can.

One major matter remains unresolved: where to have the staff Christmas dinner. The local Tandoo restaurant is vetoed by the aging deputy head, who declares that it "always gives her problems". Other exotic cuisine suggested by younger women get short shrift. "I know," declares the head, "Let's all go to the Bulgichain Steak House. It's ever so nice." Glim looks all round.

Meanwhile, the drama at Culture and Anarchy Comp has not yet subsided. The end of term sees several notable departures, and a ceremony is called for. No, not just Jason and his mob, but the last of the "old guard" from the staff from the school's sec. mod. and grammar school past; the last of the pre-war generation are hanging up their boardusters for the last time.

The most significant loss is one of the senior teachers. Pillar of the school in so many ways . . . We boys' welfare, (that is, discipline and careers), he looks forward to horticultural old age. He has chosen a small greenhouse as his "token of esteem".

Much thought has been given to the question of what actually to hand over to him at the "do" . . . a greenhouse is rather too large. In the end, a small brass plate appears. "Steele then thy garden's shrubby bound." It says. John Crabbe, helpfully suggested by a fresh young Hon. Eng. Lit., now



'temporary terminal' in the remedial department (shortly to be recognized as "the special needs faculty").

The head of commerce is another golden oldie. Her scallie and motherly presence has guided generations of aspirant "sekertries" through CSE, RSA, and the rest. She clutches a huge Magimix and coyly promises the staff a cake or two "once she's got the hang of it".

But the best bouquets are reserved for the deputy head. The head invokes her finest rhetoric for his colleague who is, so to speak, moving onwards, outwards and upwards. . . for he has "got a school of his own" somewhere out in the Shires. The head praises his "loyalty" (always supports guess who), will miss his "acute and perceptive mind" (gave me my best ideas to flash in front of the governors), and his principled stand on so many issues (backed me up in the face of all reason). Other colleagues will no doubt miss his backbiting wit, if not his evil pipe smoke.

This done, the PE Department stagger in with crates of booze. Some already seem to be a little flushed with the exertion. An appreciative parent, the proprietor of the Athena Taverna, has donated a large box of Turkish Delight which is quickly emptied. (And don't we deserve this for all we've had to do.)

The chairperson of governors

In the beginning

The Genesis of curriculum development

The Chaos before Creation

In the beginning, all was without form, and void; the curriculum was framed but not developed. Teachers, buffeted through the emptiness of space by the winds of fashion, sought refuge in the

Handbook of Suggestions, took shelter in the examination syllabuses, and followed their textbooks wherever they might lead them through the darkness of unknown.

The coming of Light from Darkness

Out of the darkness came light. The light was divided from darkness, and the light was called Tyler. And Tyler began Tabla and Tabla began Skinner and each prophesied that the curriculum should have objectives, and that the objectives should be behavioural.

But the teachers said, these must be false

prophets, for they leave us no scope; and even our pupils are not free except to go fast or slow within the tramlines which are laid down for them. So the teachers liked not the light that they saw, and began to cry out: let not a thousand Blooms flower; if this be progress, give us back the chaos that we used to know. And that was the first day.

The division of the Sky from the Waters

The firmament was made to divide the waters from the waters; and lo, from afar off there rose a Sputnik into the sky. Then the Yanqui people were afraid, saying: what is wrong with our schooling, that the Muscovites can reach the distant heavens before us? And a lone voice cried out, saying Fear not, O Yanqui people: for I, Zacharias, have charted the road to redemption: I know the ways of curricular science. I will shew

you the wonders of Research and Development and the courses which are teacher-proof.

Then the Yanqui people gave great gifts in gold to Zacharias, and to those who were with him, for the Projects which they fashioned in High School Physics, and in Chemistry and Biology: in this manner were the people made safe from the Sputnik. And that was the second day.

The Creation of Earth, Seas and Plants

When land and sea were created, and the first Foundation was laid, its name was Nuffield. But the men from Nuffield, being not of the Yanqui tribe, cared little for curricula that were teacher-proof. They put their faith in materials that would show science as a process of discovery, and in strategies that saw teachers as critical recipients.

Many there were that followed the way, and the seeds of Nuffield Science grew and flourished as the green grass and the herb and the tree; but few were they who did not adapt the pure doctrine to their own circumstance, and many were the seeds therein rejected that the curricular wheel had come full compass, and said one unto another, lo, third day.

FEATURES

The emergence of the Sun, Moon and Stars

The lights in the firmament were made to divide day from night, and to mark the days and the seasons and the years. One was a light named Bruner, and another was a light named Senhouse, and both shone brightly upon the earth.

They sought not to identify the curriculum as product, but firmly to promote its definition as process. The teacher was to them an active

researcher, as to the Nuffield men a critical recipient and to the Yanquis a passive nomenclature. They, and their lesser stars, helped change the face of the curriculum, opening it up for pupil debate: but they had high expectations and made high demands. Few were those that followed them all the way they led. And that was the fourth day.

The advent of Fish and Fowl

When the sea was full of living creatures, and the air full of winged birds, there rose up a new wave of developers, crying: give the learners independence, let the teachers be as managers, and create resources for learning: for that is the truly cost-effective way of coping with mixed abilities.

Which being said, the McMullens made the Countesshorpes and the Taylors wrote their manifestos and the boom in tape-slides and ETV and Jackdaw-kits was born. And the Council for Educational Technology rejoiced, saying: soon shall we see the day of the home video and the

classroom computer. But its voice was not heard in the land, and few there were who believed that its prophecies would come to pass.

Then the teachers rose up, saying, we are not passive recipients, nor should we be slaves to the management of individual pupil materials; and the pupils rose up, saying, we are ready to be independent learners but we are not prepared to suffer the inadequacies of the material our teachers provide for us. So the earth was rent with contention and the curriculum was seen to be neither fish nor fowl. And that was the fifth day.

The development of the Beast and of Man

The beasts came forth, and all that moved on earth, and man: and by equal opportunities, woman. And development flourished in the schools and in the teachers' centres, and the curriculum became a cottage industry. The Schools Council looked on all this, and saw that it was good, for the power was rendered to the teachers. But the politicians and the parents liked

it not so well, saying: who shall now control the quality? and, where does the accountability lie?

And the pupils moaned out, crying show us not another home-grown worksheet, but give us to read a glossy textbook. And the rolls desecrated and the euns came and the secret garden was laid waste. And that was the sixth day.

The blessed Day of Rest

When all had been created and made, the time was come for the striving to cease. The curriculum was no longer meant to be developed, but its framework was spelled out, and the will of the Department was made known. The teachers went forth to be accounted, and laid out their nims for all to see; and the Authorities too made as if to specify their curricular requirements, as it was written in the circular of 6/81. But the whitewash was great, and the window-dressing still greater; and for the pupils little changed, save that their options became more narrow and their materials

less adequate.

Now the man Joseph, an elder of the people, saw all this and rejoiced, in that it accorded with Government policy and with the Election Manifesto: and he praised his god named Thatcher, saying, I will set thee up a Curriculum Council, that all shall know who is the lord of the primaries, and of the secondaries, and of those who serve in them. And a great calm descended on the land, and all who had any laurels rested on them. And that was the seventh day.

The New Dawn

At this time there came a great awakening in the place named *Ultima Thule*, which is being translated Further Education. Developments grew and flourished in the tribes of TEC, and of BEC, and of FEU and MSC. And the teachers therein rejoiced that the curricular wheel had come full compass, and said one unto another, lo, third day.

since this is a wheel it is necessary to reinvent it. And happily they heard of Tyler's prophecies that the curriculum should have objectives, and that the objectives should be behavioural. And that was the eighth day, and also the first day; and the cycle began anew.

Tony Becher



The girl by the window

In the reaction against Japan's fiercely competitive education system fond memories of a gentler school attract increasing interest, Jean Wilson finds.



In 1981 a book made publishing history in Japan: 4,500,000 copies of it were sold in its first year, and the paperback edition was reprinted five times in the following year. It was the work of Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, one of Japan's most popular and glamorous television personalities, who appears regularly in a chat show called *Tetsuko's room*.

Her manner is startlingly different from that of other television personalities. She is unaffectedly charming, natural and vivacious and was voted the most sympathetic person on Japanese television.

Her theme, too, while it would not stir much enthusiasm in the average European reader, is of desperate interest to Japanese parents, for it deals with the education of their children.

Totto-char is Tetsuko's account of her own education at a little school in Tokyo during the war. The book is sub-titled *The little girl at the window*. "Over by the window" was a phrase much used in Japan to describe someone who didn't fit in, who was on the fringe of things, never a good place to be in Japan. It was as such a child, in disgrace, expelled from her primary school as unmanageable, that Totto-chan, as she called herself, was sent to a different school called *Tonno Gakuen*.

It had been founded in 1937 by Sosaku Kobayashi, who was then 44 years old. Tetsuko's book is a celebration of this man and his methods. She is convinced that his system, put into practice today, would do much to eradicate the violence and despair which is now almost endemic in Japanese education and which creates such deep anxiety in parents. For there is no doubt that for an increasing number of young people in Japan, school is a hell of examinations.

Peter Milward, SJ, of Sophia University in Tokyo, describes his own little examination hell in *Outcasts in Modern Japan*. In 1980, out of 1,500 hopefuls he had to choose 101. The rooms of Sophia are filled to the doors at examination times with anxiety-ridden students. One out of 15 will be selected for what Peter Milward terms "four years of heavenly happiness", a view of university life echoed by many teachers.

A teacher at Nanzan University, Nagoya, told me that once a student reaches university his or her worries are over; everybody graduates. It is the getting there that is so tough. In every stage of education, competition is fierce - first to get into the right kindergarten, then into the good primary school, then to the most reputable junior high school and so on through high school to university, and that has to be a good one too. *Kyoku mama* (education mothers) as they are called, are notorious in Japan. Fathers have little to do with the education of their offspring; it is the envious "mamas" who are responsible for the numbers of uniformed school children travelling quite late in the evenings home from their *juku* (crammer) where their heads are stuffed with facts, learnt by rote, after a full day at their junior or high school. Some university rooms are rented at weekends and public holidays by *hiku* who have seized the opportunity of making a fair living out of preparing very young children for junior



Tetsuko Kuroyanagi (left) tells of her happy days at a school where the leeching method was based on the cheerful atmosphere of Japanese kindergartens in the 1890s (above). In contrast to the present competitive system where mothers (right) start the pressure for a university place from as early as the age of three.

high school entrance examinations. The rat race begins very early.

It must be said that many children survive it. Exam rooms are often filled with round earnest faces under *Kanikari* type headbands bearing desperate slogans, like "Certain success in exams". But the suicide rate among students is rising and causing consternation in a country where suicide is not taboo. There are daily reports of vicious attacks by students on teachers and by teachers on students; something that even ten years ago would have been almost unthinkable. *Sensei* (teacher) is a style of address indicating respect and admiration in Japan where corporal punishment in schools was always abhorred.

So what has happened to post-war students and teachers that has altered their behaviour so radically? One explanation is that the old system separated the successful from the less so. Successful students are easier to teach. Presumably the failures found their levels and adapted to them. In Japan, now, the less successful students remain in a competitive system geared to the achiever. Often they cannot cope with it. Sometimes they drop out and join the *bosozoku*, the gangs of wild motor bikers who roar around city streets late at night. For increasing numbers of young people in Japan the endless educational trail is too much; they, too, are "over by the window".



too fruitless. Never a whisper is heard, never is a head raised from a book without permission.

In the 1920s Kobayashi, by then a young teacher of music, came to Europe. He looked at schools and studied curricula, which he later introduced into Japanese primary schools. *Tonno Gakuen*, which he started in Tokyo just before the war, sounds in some way like A S Neill's Summerhill, even to the railway carriages which he used as classrooms. The timetable was flexible, and study was informal and often took place outside school. Strange or idiosyncratic behaviour aroused little comment and prudence was unknown. The written word did not take absolute precedence over the spoken word, and music and movement were much emphasized. Clothes were casual as were the qualifications of some of the teachers.

Like Neill, Kobayashi took on difficult children. He also accepted the weak and the handicapped and was peculiarly sensitive to their needs. Achievement is all-important to a Japanese and he made sure that the handicapped in his school experienced what me of his ex-students, a dwarf, described as "the indescribable joy of successful achievement". And he meant physical achievement.

Achievement is the key word. Education was always the goal. Flexibility did not mean inaction or procrastination. Certain problems were set daily and had to be solved. What was flexible was the order in which they could be tackled. Novelty in teaching methods did not include a rejection of respected traditions.

Like A S Neill, Kobayashi Sensei was on the side of the child, but he intended that the children in his care should become good, caring, cooperative citizens. He was not creating rebels. Discipline was maintained, though, according to Tetsuko, there was little need of it; the mixture of European "progressiveness" and traditional Japanese correctness produced, she claims, children who behaved beautifully and unfettered. This is possibly the great appeal of the system: it does not offer "uncharted freedom". It offers a flexibility which is controlled and directed, a typically Japanese compromise, a little bit of this and that. Yet, at the time it had its critics and some parents removed their children to more orthodox establishments. When the school was bombed flat by the Americans in 1945 that was the end of it. It was never resurrected. Perhaps it was premature. The old system was working well. Indeed it produced the economic miracle. But things have changed now and parents are ready to try anything, especially a method which can make a Tetsuko out of an unmanageable child.

There are signs too that many teachers are eager to try Kobayashi's system: parts of *Totto-char* are being used as official teaching material in training colleges and schools.

"There had never been a school like it in Japan," writes Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. Her book may bring about several like it before long.

Totto-char: the little girl at the window. Published 1981 by Kodansha Publishers, Tokyo. Translated into English by Dorothy Britton.

THE GLOOM OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Ding-dong unmerrily on high in the bleak Midwinter home

What a dismal, gloomy, cheerless, disappointing business a child's Christmas often was for the last generation! It seems we were, culturally, caught between the Fezziwig-jollity of the expansive Dickensian yuletide and the Sockis-electronics of the expensive consumerist winter festival. We fitted, as children, uncomfortably between Tiny Tim and ET.

True, it meant a holiday, a relief from the pitiless tedium of school, but to exchange that for the ennui of dutiful visitations on and receptions of a remorseless stream of gruesome relatives was merely to swap types of monotony. It was like being transferred from the Lubianka prison to Devil's Island.

The schools of today delight in the festivities, and, from the infant hoe-down to the sixth-form knees-up, all is colour and gaiety. Our schools took a suspicious, puritanical view of such proceedings. "Away in a Manger" might temporarily replace "Jesus Bids Us Shine" at the top of the hymn charts, but that was the only concession. Even the calendar we made in hand-work seemed designed to remind us that, having been paroled for a few days to glower and scowl in the presence of our kinsfolk, we would be back for another year on the treadmill of sums and at the hem-picking of spellings.

The weather was incriminably bad. The dampish climate of the Manchester area makes its inhabitants as fastidiously judgmental about rain as the most delicate of wine-tasters. The incessant rain of December was described by Mancunians as "wetting", to differentiate it from the drier variety that sprinkled mildly through the spring months or from the soaking brand that engulfed Old Trafford in summer whenever Cyril Washbrook or Eddie Paynter took guard. The internal ritual and the external elements combined to place a total embargo on play, and even the wireless was forbidden, lest its crackling but soothing tones disturb the banal converse of our elders.

As with most childhood remembrance, ten or a dozen Christmases now appear as one, and a single, grim, unsatisfactory memory remains, like a composite resolution at the Labour Party Conference. Just as such a motion has several clauses, so does that unitary recollection have three elements, as for Christmas Eve, the awful Day itself, and Boxing Day.

Mrs Penny was our next-door neighbour, of whom it was contemptuously said that she couldn't boil water. Some country cousin continued to send her annually a goose, and given Mrs Penny's culinary incompetence, it was delivered to us for my grandmother, the most domestically talented and most charitable of women, to prepare. Christmas Eve, therefore, was devoted to this task, and six of us assaulted the unhappy bird, plucking and drawing and singing, until the room was a whirling snowstorm resembled a

scene in one of those Marx Brothers' films where there is a ludicrous pillow-fight. Our compensation was that we retained the feathers, for stuffing bolsters, and the giblets which my grandmother transformed into a not unreasonable pie. Just prior to the Christmas of 1940, and with Mrs Penny et al cowering and skulking in their Anderson shelters, we stoically plucked her goose as the Götterdämmerung of the Hun blitz raged about us. We swarmed in frenzied attack around the goose, like six Spitfires attacking a Heinkel bomber. This was our finest hour.

Wet blankets to the end, many of our neighbours and relatives were determined to die at Christmas, and, one Christmas Eve, Mrs Penny was called to glory. Bang went our gilet pie. The knock at the back door brought not the traditional goose, but a weeping daughter, speaking the words I heard a hundred times at that mournful portal: "Will your gran come round and lay me mother out".

My grandmother was, in a field where the competition was brisk and abrasive, the undisputed laying-out champ, and the bereaved would walk miles to solicit her much-suspected services. Her attachment to mutual aid would have gladdened the hearts of cooperative enthusiasts from Kropotkin to Michael Young, and had the law allowed, she would doubtless have completed the chain of her good work by erecting an incinerator in the back-garden and establishing a self-help crematorium.

A cerebral veil has been drawn over the gifts and fare of Christmas Day itself, presumably because the stocking failed to bulge and the board to groan. The abiding recollection is of the embarrassment of the King's broadcast. Politically, the household and its attendant brood was divided sharply into male republican and female royalist factions. Fore and aft of that painful broadcast, the distasteful side rose as one woman and loudly chorused the national anthem, while, between times, they perched forward in rapt attention to every last regal cliché. As unified in their enmity, the menfolk sat solidly smoking and commenting darkly on the financial extravagance, moral turpitude and physical defects of the royal family. Robespierre would have proudly

clasped their hands with tear-strewn cheek and dreamed of a guillotine busily decapitating outside the Free Trade Hall.

It was dreadfully uncomfortable for the child who sympathized with the latter sect and yet loved the former group (or at least some of them). Compromise was impossible. One cannot half-stand and semi-warble "God Save the King". One tried to hide in the background, miserably caught between smiling approvingly with cavalier aunts and suppressing giggles at the more amusing cotillions levelled by roundhead uncles. The ultimate was when my older brother, emboldened by the Cromwellian host of his mentors, described poor George VI as "His Ricketty-legged Majesty King Stanley the Stammerer". The discomfit of being both wildly appreciative and mutely appalled was an intolerable emotion with which to grapple. Only the curt intervention of my father who, like Brutus, "would have brook'd th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome as easily as a king", saved the teenage slanderer from the least equivalent of a drumhead court-martial.

Shoulders hunched and faces screwed in the teeth of the untiring rain, we tramped, each Boxing Day, to my other grandmother's, and, each Boxing Day, my Auntie May, who was a hit up-market and learned the Lambeth Walk, made us perform a version of *Cinderella*. It is sometimes argued that radio and television conspired to kill off family entertainment, with kith and kin gathered around the parlour piano for a binful of DIY showbiz. If our *Cinderella* was anything to judge by, then family entertainment committed suicide, and the telly is rather the civilized rescuer of mankind from cultural barbarism.

It was excruciating. My mother was Cinders, and I was Buttons; my brother persuaded like Marco and Giuseppe in *The Gondoliers* to set aside his republican fallacies in the public interest, was Prince Charming; and my grandma and my great-aunt Bertha were the Ugly Sisters. My Auntie May doubled as Baron Hardup and the Fairy Godmother; provided words and score; collected properties and improvised costumes; created the set, and directed in bravura style. She was a proper little Ivor Novello, and she certainly

seemed to have a *Mousetrap* ("Cinderella—now in its eleventh unspeakable year") on her hands. Only the decision of the Ugly Sisters to take up residence in Rhyl halted that apparently endless and dulling series of loathsome revivals.

I was, some years afterwards, reminded of these three days that shook the world, and the pre- and post-Scrooge conflict of attitude they continued to evoke. George VI and the Ugly Sisters had joined Mrs Penny in celebrating Christmas with the angels, and my wife and I found ourselves the sole members of the family prepared to journey forth, come the season, to visit two aged aunts in Derbyshire who were the rump of the once powerful monarchist party. Other relations seized on this opportunity to load us down with their presents and good wishes, and another collective memory was formulated: of trekking, like St Nicholas, with a sackload of tins of biscuits, by train into the remoteness of a Pennine village.

The nuns were already up to their antimacassars in biscuits. They looked as if they were stocktaking for Huntley and Palmer's. And yet, unfailingly courteous, they received each succeeding tin of biscuits as manna in the desert. Yet would have thought biscuits had been hanged for 50 years. Ben Gunn's desire for elixir looked positively diffident compared with their joy at the sight of yet another tin of assorted creams. On the return journey, we ferried back the aunts' presents for our nearest and dearest, and, within the hour, one could witness both sides of the Christmas medal.

Intrepidly daring, I handed my brother, survivor of a dozen geese and as many royal broadcasts and *Cinderellas*, his carefully wrapped and delicately labelled packet of handkerchiefs. He tore them brutally from their festive garb and dashed them angrily to the floor. "Do they think," he snarled, "that I've got a smelly bleeding hooter?"

Like me, his soul, usually sunny and affable, had been scarred for Christmas by the horrors of our first "nowells", and, much as I admired my great-aunt's polite fortitude in the face of a vicious mountain, I warmly applauded his liberating gesture. How often do we adults say "Christmas is a lovely time for children", or "we make an effort at Christmas for the children's sake". Let us hope these complacent phrases are not imprinted on that fearful list of sayings we heard as children and vowed never to deploy as parents, like, "eat up your dinner, there are thousands starving in China", or "because I say so".

When I take my place alongside Mrs Penny, George VI and the Ugly Sisters I shall, each Christmas, glance anxiously at our armful copy of *The Times Educational Supplement*, to see whether any of my children have felt the urge to write an article like this.

Eric Midwinter



REVIEW

Other times, other places

by Victoria Neumark

Anthropology and Anthropologists. By Adam Kuper.
Routledge & Kegan Paul £4.95. 0 7100 9409 4.
Chisungu. By Audrey Richards.
Tussock Publications £4.95. 0 422 78070 7.
Sepik River Societies. By Deborah B Gewirtz.
Yale University Press £22.50. 0 300 02872 5.
Archaeology of the Dreamtime. By Josephine Flood.
Collins £13.95. 0 00 216444 2.
The Innocent Anthropologist. By Nigel Barley.
British Museum Publications £9.95. 0 7141 8054 8.
The Last Lords of Palenque. By Victor Perera and Robert D Bruce.
Little, Brown (Huckinson Distrib) £12.95. 316 69916 0.
Nisa - The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman. By Marjorie Shostak.
Penguin £3.95. 0 14 10 6291 2.

The great thing about anthropology is that under its ugly one can embrace philosophy, linguistics, history, geography, psychology, politics, biology, economics, literature and the study of art and music, as well as the more obvious cognates of ethnography, sociology, ethology and archaeology; one can have coloured photographs too! For the bemused lay reader approaching a subject so diverse and, it must be said, so exciting, there is a lot to recommend Professor Adam Kuper's introduction though, alas, there are no photographs. First written in 1973 but updated last year, *Anthropology and Anthropologists* is a lively and readable skip through the ideas and personalities of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Leach, Lévi-Strauss and other figures on the British scene.

Kuper has been criticized for his rather mild dishing of the dirt in what purports also to be an introduction to an academic subject. For those who are not university students, this will serve to make discussion of the divergences between

More serious, perhaps, is his omission of feminist anthropology, an important and developing specialism whose best known precursor is Margaret Mead. Though Mead is American, her work has had a great deal of influence in this country.

One of the first and most important female British anthropologists was Audrey Richards, whose classic *Chisungu* is now available in paperback. First published in 1956, it is the account of a girls' initiation ceremony performed among the Bemba of northern Zimbabwe (as now is) in 1931. Richards, as an inheritor of the traditions both of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, analyses her very detailed material both in the light of function - to ensure health and fertility for future mothers and children - and social structure - she suggests that the *chisungu* could be seen as an extreme impression of the dilemma of a matrilineal society in which men are dominant but the line goes through women. Certainly *chisungu* for the protagonists or victims who undergo it is a ritual containing morn humiliation than congratulation, but compared to the genital mutilation practised widely through much of Africa it seems mild and Richards tells us that Bemba women are famous among the patrilineal Bantu to the south for their fierceness.

Richards' book is a classic by virtue of its clear and well presented ethnography, but also its careful covering of all the options then fashionable - final sections on unconscious conflicts and symbolic structures tie the wealth of observation together.

Deborah B Gewirtz attempts a far more ambitious feat of ethnography. *Sepik River Societies* professes to tell us everything we could possibly wish to know about the New Guinea people called Chambri, for long dominated by the neighbouring Intol, who were made famous by Bateson in his *Navan*. Bateson's erstwhile wife, Margaret Mead, had studied the Chambri in 1933 as an example of a female-dominated society, and Gewirtz makes an interesting case for this being only a temporary state of affairs. The Chambri, as she sees them, have been in a state of flux for at least a century, adjusting to huge social upheavals caused by the introduction of Western trade and the Japanese invasions and by the introduction of the stranger *tera* a *divine* *males* which has shaken the staple crop crop. It is the threat of exogamy in such perilous times which lent, she argues, importance to women.

Sepik River Societies is a scholarly and well-



The Bantu as the Victorians saw them

researched book but it assumes too much knowledge for the lay reader. For those well-versed in cargo cults, kluish tables, and the extensive literature on the religion, economy and cultural geography of the Oceania area, it will be a welcome addition.

Archaeology and anthropology overlap particularly in the case of non-literate societies. *Archaeology of the Dreamtime* is a glossy-produced survey of the history of the aboriginal peoples of Australia. Since prehistory for these purposes means before the coming of Europeans, prehistory in the Australian bush is very close to today, and Ma Flood clearly has great sympathy for the sons and grand-daughters of her artists and poets wanderers. For she has interpreted many of the tools and paintings, arrangements of rocks in red desert and rotting carved wooden posts in the light of what modern aboriginals have to tell about the "dreamtime", as they, as it were Jungianly, call their past. Still, the bulk of the book is rather technical, despite bright photographs.

Quite un-academic in tone is the extraordinarily self-indulgent effort at whimsy which Nigel Barley has produced. I suspect there will be a large market for this ridiculous book among field workers past and present, for I am sure that there is a lot of truth to life in its moanings and tall stories about time spent among the Duwayos in northern Cameroon. However, I hope I am not being too much of a killjoy if I divine beneath its flippant facade a real distaste for ignorant niggles and the vagaries of WAWA (West Africa Wins Again) as expatriates have it. *The Innocent Anthropologist* is, I fear, an insular boor, whose mind travel has failed to broaden.

Quite other in tone are the last two books of this batch. Perera and Bruce have written a beautiful threnody not only for the passing of a culture whose high lineage they honour, but also

The Olmecs colossal head is one of the illustrations to Richard Diehl's *Tula: The Toltec Capital of Ancient Mexico* (Routledge and Kegan Paul £16.00), in which a medieval society at least as civilized as its European counterpart is reasonably described and analysed, with numerous photographs and drawings.

for the imminent threat to a way of life for individuals they like and revere. This sort of anthropology, stemming perhaps from Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques*, justifies that all-embracing anthropological aegis as speculation, so thoroughly informed by being steeped in the life it describes, roams around the beliefs, habits history and future of a people.

They are a tiny remnant, the Lacandonese of the Yucatán, of that vast Mayan civilization which dominated Central America a millennium ago, and their habitat in the mahogany forests is being eroded as fast by the greed of commerce as their minds are seduced by the missionaries of Christianity and Mammon (almost indistinguishable in this account). Chan K'in, perhaps the last of *The Last Lords of Palenque*, is an old man who holds together by no magic other than that of the storyteller the world of his people. It is - or was, for since the book was written they have cut down all the mahogany trees at Nahá - a life where men and women have fitted in with their natural surroundings, and with poetry and music and myth, fitted the powers of these natural surroundings into themselves.

"True people" as *Hach winik* the Lacandonese call themselves: if one compares the words with which Chan K'in binds his people to these of, say, President Reagan, it is hard not to agree.

Though in translation, the Lacandonese words at times sing off the page. Their interaction with their chroniclers is a dense story, almost like a novel. *Nisa* is a simpler portrayal. *Nisa* is a woman from a hunting-gathering community in the Kalahari bush. Ms Shostak has been content to leave to her the telling of her tale, with discreet background and annotation on pronunciation, history and belief systems. Consequently the book has all the vitality which this gifted *racoon* exudes, a strength of spirit undimmed by a life in which tragedy struck many times.

Her first much-loved husband, her two infant children and two who grew to maturity, a sister and parents all died; her second husband ill-treated and deserted her; she herself nearly died from illness. But this is just life. Or, as *Nisa* says: "And so, we lived and lived and lived in that place, ate meat and our hearts were happy". Not that *Nisa* is some kind of heartless savage who holds "life is cheap". Nor can the reader of this book take merely a scientific interest in the lifestyle of a "primitive economy", absorbing though the details of hunting and gathering are to the average moucher in Sainsbury's.

Here is *Nisa* on the death of her mother. "I lived and cried, lived and cried. My mother had been so beautiful... her face, so lovely. When she died she caused me great pain. Only after a long time was I quiet again."

Theatre imports

Master Harold... And The Boys. By Athol Fugard.
National (Cottesloe) Theatre.
Bob Fosse's *Dancin'*.
Theatre Royal Drury Lane.
Jean Seberg. By Marvin Hamlisch.
Christopher Adler, Julian Barry.
National (Olivier) Theatre.
The Sleeping Prince. By Tureana Ratigan.
Theatre Royal, Haymarket.

Theatrical imports fill the stage. From South Africa, the Market Theatre Company brings Athol Fugard's latest play *Master Harold... And The Boys* directed by the author. Set in the St George's Park Tearoom, Part Elizabeth, 1950, it concerns the relationship between a white South African schoolboy (Hally) and two waiters in his mother's employ (Sam and Willy). Hally's sick, crippled father and perpetually rowing with his mother, Hally has found in Sam his closest friend. Throughout their relationship he has been educating Sam from Standard four to Standard nine. What he comes to see, but cannot face, is that Sam's natural intelligence and wisdom has always made him Hally's teacher. For all his affectionate camaraderie with the grown-men "boys" Hally is always boss-man. His whiteness and social-economic superiority both force him into the role and justify his taking it.

It is Fugard's "most totally and immediately biographical" play: humorous, tender, painful. Bravely written it is also too close for comfort to the events it recounts: Hally's part being intrusively obvious, the educational elements obviously planted to help the plotting. Duart Sytwin's laboured acting as Hally highlights instead of concealing these weaknesses. Not that he isn't whinily South African, nor that the cliché-ridden talk and hectoring of his mother are not true. What is false is his relentless acting by indication.

He has an action-reaction for every thought: it takes him a whole minute to replace a telephone receiver, two or three to drag his feet to the exit door. Perhaps Fugard's direction into blame. John Kani and Ramfiso Makhene (blessedly are not confined by it. Makhene, acting with natural ex-

uberance as Willy, skillfully rescues him from being "the kaffir you have to laugh at". While Kani's Sam is the kind of beautiful, true and deep acting dedicated theatregeers pray for. His stillness, humanity, dignity save *Master Harold... And The Boys* from being a minor work of reminiscence, making it a testament to human love and care; a heart-rending cry of shame at betrayal, a crushing indictment of apartheid. Sam and Willy dancing together - rehearsing their rivalry in the New Brighton ballroom-dance contest - is a joyous affirmation that the human spirit remains unquenched by oppression.

Their amateur effort might seem inept among the professionals in Bob Fosse's *Dancin'* but their human delight in what they do makes them more enjoyable to watch. Sold as the all-dancing musical in three acts, it opens with a number breaking-down Fosse's choreographic language. This is a mistake because thereafter every succeeding item seems increasingly repetitive. The show embodies US ideals and attitudes rising to a climax in praise of America - *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Artfully manufactured, efficiently assembled, it has been imported after running for years on Broadway. Sadly for the company it has come too late. After the superbly individual dancing seen in *Cats*, *Sung & Dance* and *Dash - Dancin'* comes across as over-programmed and under-creative.

Jean Seberg (book, lyrics and music also imported from America) is similarly less than the sum of its parts. A workaday cast of capable pros does well enough, but the piece desperately needs a star performance to generate magic. Seberg's life was cruelly unhappy: why it should be turned into a musical attacking the American dream and done by the British National Theatre is puzzling.

Less of a puzzle (with Omar Sharif imported to dazzle) is Rattigan's *The Sleeping Prince* brought from Chichester. It is pure chocolate-box theatre with musical-comedy costumes. Judy Campbell scores as The Grand Duchess; John Moffat as the British diplomat. If it keeps the Haymarket in business why complain?

John James

Back in the USSR

Tula.
JFS Comprehensive, Camden

An atmosphere of foreboding was created as we were shown in our seats in the school hall by a group of stern Russian guards. The production was very about in sea was based on the events surrounding the trial and subsequent imprisonment of Anatoly Shcharansky in 1978. It was an examination of the plight of Jewish dissidents in the USSR in the face of fierce soviet anti-Zionism - a theme of particular interest to this Jewish school.

Tula was written by a member of staff, Jonathan Gillis, and was performed by a cast of 30 fourth, fifth and sixth formers. It was broadly faithful to

the facts of the case, not shying away from the lengthy legal and political wrangles which preceded Shcharansky's trial. Mr Gillis concedes that he has taken liberties with his interpretation of the characters involved and has succeeded in producing a powerful and often moving script.

The content of the play, together with some excellent acting, good direction and effective use of stage lighting made this school production a cut above the average end of term effort. The occasionally flagging interest of younger sections of the audience was revived by a series of choreographed interludes and a striking robot dancer, deftly introduced into the stage-managed trial.

Christopher Denvir

Red movies

Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film. By Jay Leyda.
George Allen and Unwin £7.95.
Masters of the Soviet Cinema: Crippled Creative Biographies. By Herbert Marshall.
Routledge and Kegan Paul £14.95.

Kino, released in paperback, is the classic history of Russian cinema. It takes the story from pre-revolutionary times to the late Fifties, with a brief chapter surveying the period up to the present, added for this edition. It neatly incorporates Leyda's own reminiscences of his time in the Soviet Union during the Thirties and these in the authority of his account.

Leyda, Herbert Marshall was a student of film in Russia and knew the directors whose biographies he

sets out to write. He wants to show how the work of Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin and Dzavhenko was strangled by the Soviet regime but not at all, it seems, with the aim of vindicating these men. He acknowledges his personal debt to Pudovkin, for example, calls him a "beautiful human being", yet sees no contradiction in dismissing him as "an obscure and a party hack. Who needs Uncle Stalin, with friends like this?"

Marshall's insensitivity to the pressures on the four during the Stalin era is mirrored in his appalling prose style. "One of the most unique directors" is elementary stuff, but "the final climax at the end" confirms him as a master of the film. He sums up both the theme of his book and its essential flavour when he writes: "the works that they created were no longer their works and they were no longer able to create them". Ponder it for yourself.

Robin Buss

ARTS



Simplicity and wit

Quentin Blake exhibition.
National Theatre. Lyttelton Circle
Foyer until January 28.

Quentin Blake was lying flat on his tummy surrounded by 18 or 19 children, similarly prone, in the Lyttelton Circle Foyer. Everyone was busy drawing ferocious dog-people and outrageous plants with multi-colored dramatic intensity and just occasionally to illustrate a story outlined by the writer John Yeomans. The results of this and similar workshops are being displayed to complete the Quentin Blake retrospective at the National Theatre.

A favourite with children of all ages, illustrator of books by other authors - notably John Yeomans, Ronald Dahl, Russell Hoban and Michael Rosen - as



well as his own stories, Quentin Blake has the gift of combining deft simplicity with telling wit. Just to look at some of his drawings - Dahl's horrible Twits couple, the wicked caricatures of Michael Rosen or Aunt Fidget Workham-Strong with her iron hat and expression to match - is to bring a smile to the lips. It's a pleasure to see the original drawings with their greater dramatic intensity and just occasionally to illustrate a story outlined by the writer John Yeomans. The results of this and similar workshops are being displayed to complete the Quentin Blake retrospective at the National Theatre.

Quentin Blake thinks the National a suitable venue for a major exhibition of his work as his love of the theatre has influenced the immediacy of his work. He has been illustrating children's books since 1960, and has been tutor in illustration in the School of Graphic Design at the Royal Academy since 1965, but he first drew professionally for *Punch* in 1949. *Punch* covers, work for *The Spectator* and *Penguin* are all on show, but one keeps coming back to familiar favourites Jack and Nancy, Angelo and Mr Magnolia.

Ronald Dahl loomed into view at the exhibition's opening. "What are you doing here?" asked someone. "Home-age" said Mr Dahl.

Heather Neill

Don't mention Christmas

Risky City and Whale Music.
Elstree Youth Theatre, Hertfordshire.
The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby.
University College School, Hampstead.
Summer.
Blackheath High School for Girls.
The Trojan Women.
Bulmershe College of Higher Education.

Special AA road signs pointed the way to Elstree Youth Theatre's latest production and there were colour posters in many of the local shops. In only 18 months (the company has made its presence felt in a big way in Hertfordshire, recruiting Mel Smith as its Patron and posing for photos with Paul McCartney. On stage, however, it still has a long way to go.

It was a bold move to stage a double bill of modern plays; possibly it was too bold, for several of those involved seemed to have no idea of what they were meant to be saying, nor any concept of how to phrase lines. Thus in the first play, Ron Hutchinson's *Risky City*, the anti-hero Dylan Thomas poem as a well-known Dylan Thomas poem as if the first line really was "Do not go gentle into that good night".

The fussy production of *Risky City* (there were enough lighting cues to make one believe that the whole play, not just one scene, took place in a

disco-nightclub) diluted the effect of the story. Rather overwrought in the first place, it became, in the words of one of the characters, "just another dreary lecture on the failure of the comprehensive ideal". Only one woman's part in it too, but the girls got their chance in the second production of the evening. Anthony Minghella's *Whale Music*, recently seen on television, was a much more sensitive piece, a study of an unmarried mother and the readjustments to life which pregnancy forces her to make.

Strangely, among other school and youth group productions this month, it was difficult to find so much as a mention of Christmas. Even University College School's production of *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* ended with the Crummles' version of *Romeo and Juliet* and not the novel's scene of Yuletide reconciliation. Apparently based on the first part of David Edgar's famous RSC adaptation (although the programme did not mention this), UCS's staging tried hard to convey the scope and range of the novel, flipping the action back and forth between London, Yorkshire and Portsmouth. But although the company (ably led by Nick Luthi as a ginger-headed Nicholas) coped very well with the demands it made upon them, they were not helped by a stop-go production style which imposed an unnecessary blackout after every one of the 36 short scenes.

Behind you!

Sleeping Beauty.
Theatre Royal, Stratford East.
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.
Half Moon Theatre, Mile End Road.
Abbadadro.
Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.

East London boasts two smashing Christmas shows this year. *Sleeping Beauty* at Stratford East is a brightly coloured, hectic affair with lots of Theatre Royal lends itself perfectly to traditional Victorian staging and design. *Abbadadro* triumphs again and again with spectacular backdrops

and gauges. David Cregan's script toys playfully with the story, there's a funny, smut-free drag dame as Sleeping Beauty's nunny and bags of "look behind you". An all singing all dancing show with no half embarrassed pop star as front man. Strongly recommended - take children and earplugs.

Like Sleeping Beauty, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at the Half Moon is squarely aimed at children. Andrew Ailly has sensibly compressed CS Lewis's story into a fast moving adventure, drawing the audience straight into the spongy winter world of Narnia with no preamble about whose wardrobe it is or why it's there. In fact the audience is led through the musty-smelling wardrobe to their seats in the darkened traverse auditorium. There's a magnificent giant, lots of flashes and smoke and despite some seemingly extraneous songs, a gripping good versus evil plot with lots of twists and turns. Lewis lovers may

At Blackheath High School for Girls the major stumbling block was unfortunately the play itself. Edward Bond's *Summer* is a demanding piece only recently staged by the National Theatre. Set in an unspecified country in Eastern Europe, it is primarily a study of the relationship between two elderly women, a relationship which dates back to the last war. Complicating matters is the fact that one of the women is dying. I was not entirely convinced by the production (which was prefaced by two home-dramatized Fables), nor was dramatic credibility helped by the school's insistence on girls playing men's parts.

Convincing and dramatic all the way, however, was Bulmershe College's production of *The Trojan Women*. Annette Cotterill's new version, conflated from texts by Jean-Paul Sartre and John Barton, gave plenty of opportunity to actors, musicians, designer and director alike. The chorus grovelled on the sand-covered floor; there was an electrifying performance by Kathy A Klein as Hecuba and a final scene depicting the destruction of Troy when flames and smoke literally engulfed the theatre. A wonderfully exciting production in which visiting students from the University of Eastern Michigan were understandably thrilled to have taken part.

Hugh David

finch at Lucy and Edmund's East End accents, but who could fall to love to hate a witch who says things like: "But your face you bad-breathed baboon!"

Stepping Westward to the Lyric Hammersmith and *Abbadadro*, which has music by Abba, lyrics by Don Black and a cast that includes singers Elaine Paige and B A Robertson. It's a dog's breakfast of a show involving *Sleeping Beauty* (unaccountably linked with the Beast), *Aladdin*, *Chiderella* and the magic of all the pantomimes by setting them against a background of video and computer games. It fails pretty miserably. There are some good things in it - a song and dance number performed by crows and some vigorous vocalizing by Elaine Paige - but generally it fails to capture the imagination. A sad waste of the talents of actors Phil Daniels and Sylvester McCoy.

Nick Baker

ARTS

Princess of poets

A Celebration Of and For Frances Horowitz (1938-1983). New Departures 16, 0 902689 12 6. Published from Piccadilly, Bisleigh, Stroud, Glos. £2.00 (50p mail order).

When Frances Horowitz - poet, teacher and broadcaster of poetry - died of cancer early last October, the poets of Britain, in an unprecedented spirit of cooperation, gathered to mourn and to celebrate her in a series of benefit readings at the Poetry Society, in the Colston Hall, Bristol, in Oxford, and on December 3, at the Young Vic in London where David Heycock's television film of Frances's *Poets in Schools* programme was shown in full.

The idea of asking poets to contribute to benefit readings was the inspiration of two poets, Gillian Clarke and Paul Hume, who foresaw that even if Frances recovered, she would be unable to work in support of her son, Adam. Her long illness also curtailed the free-lance writing and teaching of her husband, Roger Garfield, who for a year was her nurse and confidante. Collections of Frances's poems and of poems for Frances have appeared with loving regularity from publishers and friends since October. For the Bristol reading on October 30, Martin Bonh of Scepter Press produced an elegant anthology, *Tenfold*, with poems by Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, Peter Redgrove and D M



Thomas, among others. Frances's pamphlet, *Snow Light, Water Light*, beautifully produced by Neil Astley of Blouhux Books in Newcastle, was put into her hands shortly before her death. And now her former husband (always her admirer) Michael Horowitz has produced under his own New Departures imprint a touchingly intimate look of poems and photographs which he calls *A Celebration Of and For Frances Horowitz (1938-1983)*.

Admirers of Frances will surely want to buy this book, for it contains a number of early poems and several out-of-print poems from her first book, *The High Tower*. Frances's extraordinary physical beauty is reproduced in numerous family photographs, and poems by her son and

many of her friends frame them with out sentimentality. One of the most moving tributes is not from a poet at all, but from a politician, John Pym, who writes "She was a poet in the core, a veritable princess of the blood royal of poets, and her poetry had about it a strange power to arouse spiritual awareness of matters far removed from what the words themselves might appear to encompass". Papworth comes as near as anyone can to describing the magic of her gift. Frances was amazingly both Sybil and child, wise and innocent, a spirit quite unkillable, although all who loved her will never cease to be surprised by her physical absence.

Anne Stevenson

New ventures now at risk

When a National Lobby for the Arts was launched on December 11 at the Old Vic, a welcoming message from the Arts Council Minister for the Arts

was given by the Minister. The meeting heard politicians and leading representatives of the arts declare their opposition to these plans, describe the critical situation already facing the arts throughout the country and, from several sources, call for Lord Gower's resignation.

The crisis illustrated the crisis with particular poignancy because the dance boom continues not only in London but also the regions. The British regional dance scene, of course, is one of the inspirations of the annual Dance Umbrella festival which has just finished a crowded six weeks at centres in London and the regions. With or without Dance Umbrella's accolade, however, the common bond between all small dance companies in the UK is poverty. Only a minority receives revenue funding from the Arts Council or Regional Arts Associations. Many cannot pay even minimum Equity salaries. Such poverty arises from national economic and structural strains in funding which affect dance in two ways. First is the contradiction between Government economic cut-back and the greatly

increased public interest in dance. The Arts Council is unable to increase its allocation to dance to meet the growth in public interest, with the result that

the dance scene is left with only £38m for all dance activities throughout England once the needs have been met of the six established companies - two Royal Ballets, Festival Ballet, Rambert, Contemporary and Northern Ballet Theatre. In a year, crucial support from metropolitan authorities will also be removed, resulting in a funding crisis which would have been unimaginable a year ago.

From this derives the second source of strain, the Arts Council's response to the threat. A recent press conference made it clear that the principal strategy of response is to break the mould of funding practice established during the last 40 years. Hence a review of all the Council's responsibilities is to be completed by the end of March 1984. The review will fuel a new arts support strategy for the next five years and beyond. Since this will coincide with the demise of the metropolitan authorities it can be assumed that from the beginning of April 1984 there will be no substantial increases for anyone, meaning more cuts, a major reorganization of responsibilities between the Council and Regional Arts Associations, meaning more burdens devolved to the Associa-

Smoke-bombs and barbed wit

Hansel and Gretel. By David Rudkin. Avelin Franks School, Carlisle.

What a pace we all live at! Only three years ago Hansel and Gretel were being taught in their "Not in front of the children, dear!" when David Rudkin's modern-day version of *Hansel and Gretel* was first presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Today we are told that at least a third of our children are now watching video nasties away.

At the end of November, Carlisle's Catholic Independent, Austin Friars, certainly took a chance when they decided to be the first school to undertake a production of this very adult play. But then there are productions and productions. In the hands of P J Wilkinson at Carlisle some of the "language" was censored and great pains were taken to bring out the

searing wit so that by and large the many small children in the audience were treated in a family romp, half Ooon Show, half Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

Background music (Mr I Whetton, assisted by Mark Savage) played a major part in establishing the authentic rather-workily atmosphere of the Enchanted Forest and the Witch's Castle. "The score simply says *Tink Tink* - so we did what we could," said Mr Whetton in a generous understatement; many of the half-crazy elfin sounds were so small that one could only hear them on hands and knees. The small cast showed some extraordinary talent. For once the inclusion of an adult - a gloriously unhinged performance of the Witch by Pamela Wilkinson, wife of the producer - did not stick out like a sore thumb, because Sandman (Dominic Anblison acting in his first stage play) and Olive

(Antony Morrison) were equally adult in their portrayal of characters out of the madhouse. They had gorgeous lines, of course, to keep us all on the edge of our seats. "Gretel Cut to the cooking scene, no incising!" awails the Witch, making her exit before the final curfew; and in the last words of the play, after the children have returned safely to the bosom of their family, the feeblest father muses on the bitter emptiness of their home: "Who me all these people in my house?"

Intending producers might be advised to watch the clock. Almost three hours of non-stop bombastment by smoke-bombs, gore and barbed wit were a bit much and I staggered home a dream of having to cut up *The Editor of The Times Educational Supplement* into five equal parts.

D G Valentine

Morning glory

Leicester School of Music Gala Concert. De Montfort Hall, Leicester. December 16.

The gala in question was not, as might have been expected, a Yuletide celebration, but the biennial display of Leicestershire musical talents featuring over 400 players from the Saturday morning groups - the training ground for the highly acclaimed and well publicized Schools Symphony Orchestra.

It was hardly surprising, given the LSSO's reputation for performing twentieth-century music, plus music adviser Peter Fletcher's predilection for the composer Charles Ives, that the programme should have a twentieth century bias and one of the groups should feature an Ives piece. Unexpectedly, it was the concert band who concluded their programme with Ives' *Overture and March "766"*, an early work (using tunes from *Three Places in New England*) which gave them ample opportunity for showing off their unusually large array of brass instruments, a remarkable achievement considering that seven years ago the county boasted only one tuba.

The wind band also gave us the saucy *Children's March* by Percy Grainger, a set of variations on "Baa Baa Black Sheep" in mock heroic style. In choosing repertoire for young orchestras it is usual to avoid the classical period which offers no scope for brass or wind players, and the nineteenth century

which tends to be too difficult. Given these restrictions it was good to hear the Junior Orchestra (average age 11) trying two arrangements from *Scheherazade*. The Intermediate Orchestra chose Malcolm Arnold's *Little Suite No 2*, a cheerful piece with syncopated brass that is much beloved of youth orchestras, and the brisk *Farnham Festival Overture* by Richard Rodney Bennett, whose music for young people is always worth listening to. The Training Orchestra opted for an exciting listening rather than for a work which better reflected their obvious potential; Don Gillis's *Symphony No 2* is a "fun" piece full of sliding popular harmonies though with an unexpected slow movement in the style of Dvorak's *New World Symphony*.

After the predominance of "pastiche" music (intentional or unintentional) in the first half of the concert it was fitting that it should be left to the LSSO to tackle the full-blooded nineteenth-century repertoire using their scurrying strings and dramatic brasses to particular advantage in an exciting performance of the *Belshazzar's Feast* Overture. An occasion for self congratulation perhaps, but no one can deny the achievement of the School of Music in training so many young musicians to such a high standard; it is only to be regretted that without the help of private benefactors and the goodwill of voluntary teachers these orchestras would not exist at all.

Philippa Davidson

Old favourites

Twelfth Night. Shrewsbury Sixth Form College. The Importance of Being Earnest. Fairbrook School, Rogeley.

Old favourites never die; they go on and on. The *Twelfth Night*, a comedy of errors, is a play that many rock solid plays capable of filling the average stage (not to mention the auditorium). Anyway "School Play" still exudes assumptions about "something worthwhile".

But Chris Twogga's *Twelfth Night* for Shrewsbury Sixth Form College was a thoroughly decadent play. Dressed up in Art Deco, this Twentieth century comedy, set in the haze of a hundred elgers. The show looked stunning and Claire Storey's Viola actually looked boyish (though nothing like her brother). Her intelligent performance was matched by the singing of Nicky Hill the androgynous Pencil. And if at times what should be effortless came across as a little bit spumante, one could still enjoy such touches as Orlando's croquet lawn or Antonio's blue-plum Bogart tableau (over mind the

period). There were some outrageous re-writes too: Malvolio "in yellow stockings and brown spats"; Sir Andrew born "under the star of a tango"; but then what were they fencing for?

Fairbrook School, Rogeley made an honest stab at *The Importance of Being Earnest*. An elegantly costumed production, it moved like a measured quadrille along well managed lines. This is one of the funniest plays in the language - a very good reason for choosing to do it - but the problem of delivering those caustic epigrams requires more verbal acrobatics than the average teenager finds himself with. Nevertheless I did enjoy the elongated attitudes of Lisa Worth's Miss Prism and Sarah Cowling played Cecily. Clever with a light touch of Restoration comedy, immortal lines like "the Brighton line" are enlivened by the barnacles of time. But the Wildean pearls continue to glow. Lady Bracknell's remark that "Fortunately in England education produces absolutely nothing," raised little more than a muted giggle: perhaps it is still rather close to the bone.

Peter Fanning

Snappy

The Snap People's Theatre Trust has been touring schools in Essex, Hertfordshire and London during the last few months with *Micro-Mystery*, a play about computers, starring four actors, two men and two women, and a computer. Without props or costumes, the players skilfully and vigorously mime and act a journey through various industrial, domestic and medicinal applications of computers.

The various episodes often seem only linked to the main storyline - *Noni* and her micro-friend are apparently out to find the computer's voice. But such applications through which the journeying foursome pass -

computerized engineering, ticket collection, quality control and household gadgets - is imaginatively illustrated. The sequence in which the children have to "program" a robot is particularly good.

After the performance the actors took part in class discussions, which are followed by another exercise in simple programming. Snap to distribute with teachers, but perhaps should make more of the fact that the children would gain more from the play if they had some prior knowledge of computer applications.

Carolyn O'Grady

Snap: Triad Arts Centre, Millers One, Southmill Road, Bishop's Stortford, Herts. Tel: 0279 504095.

Poetry prize

The results of this year's National Poetry Competition were announced last Friday: Carol Ann Duffy, currently writer-in-residence for comprehension, was the first prize winner, with a joint second prize going to Regina Chadwick and Stephen Watkin. The judges were Gillian Clarke, Kevin Crossley-Holland and Vernon Scandell. A booklet containing all prize-winning and commended poems will be available next month from the Poetry Society.

Next week

Peter Mullen on the decline of "the news"; Rupert Christiansen on art history in schools; Heather Neill on Christmas shows; science textbooks

Ill at ease in Zion

In the Land of Israel. By Amos Oz. Translated from the Hebrew by Maurice Goldberg-Bartura. Chatto & Windus £8.95. 0 7011 3923 4. £2.95 654071 6.

Amos Oz is Israel's leading novelist, perhaps the most important Hebrew writer since S Y Agnon and certainly the first since Agnon to achieve a truly international reputation. Oz is also a controversialist; like André Breton in South Africa, he has become a stranger in his own country for carrying its flag to a wider world. Oz's latest book is not a novel but a collection of fiercely controversial essays, originally printed in the Hebrew paper *Davar* in the weeks that followed the Sabra and Chatilla massacres.

During October and November 1982, Oz travelled round the cities and settlements of Israel and the occupied West Bank, recording conversations and impressions. In *In the Land of Israel* is not a travel book, but a record of encounters. Oz carefully avoids specifying his own opinions - "my opinions are known" - He creates the voices of the people, he meets in an express chorus, a collective voice that expresses anger, resentment, aspiration and pride. In *In the Land of Israel* is an exile's book that dramatizes the divide within

Israel between its internationalist intelligentsia and the greater mass of the Israeli people. It is instructive to compare Saul Bellow's 1976 *To Jerusalem and Back*, the journey of a distinguished exile, a Diaspora Jew, at a rather more stable moment in Israel's history. Bellow could go back to Chicago; Oz is exiled at home, in but not of a country whose very existence underlines its origins in exile. Oz need not produce a travelogue. In few other nations is place so redolent of political and religious history and yet so completely subordinate to the lives of the individuals that inhabit it. Politics and history are the very air of Israel, in accents, tongues, the smell of foods. Oz meets Israelis from Britain, the USA, Argentina, Germany, Morocco and (the lucky few) from Russia. They inhabit a society which is an idea, an interweaving of religion and race with place. Oz brilliantly captures the ambiguities of Israeli life and explores the easily forgotten distinctions that create those ambiguities: between Judaism and Zionism, between non-Zionism and anti-Zionism, between a religion and a politics that serve a single end by radically opposed means, or a plethora of ends by a single racial, religious and national means. The fundamental opposition in Israel is between the actual and the

ideal. Thomas Mann, in the massive *Joseph and his Brothers*, had posed the Jews' history with their "God-story", the terrible reality of their lives with the promise of their religion. Unlike Christianity, that promise was present and secular, not safely parcelled off to the hereafter. As Oz almost obsessively repeats, modern Israel is suspended between Hitler and the Messiah, the one horribly actual, the other infinitely distant. Both justify a kind of cultural antinomianism based on past suffering and a historical promise. God promised a Messiah; history delivered Hitler.

In *In the Land of Israel* is a terrifying book. Its chief lesson is the human reality behind the cultural rhetoric. Oz presents a fearsome picture of society built on ideology in which a caricature of different political colourings is not an opponent but the enemy, a Khomeini, an Arafat, a Hitler. Few racial insults can be more ghastly than for one Jew to call another a "Nazi". Oz confronts Israelis with the twentieth century and offers his country a hard lesson: history (the Holocaust) does not justify a retreat from history (as the Chosen People). Oz reinvents the warning and prophecy of the Old Testament Amos: Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...

Brian Morton

Friends and neighbours

The Strawberry Hill Set: Horace Walpole and His Circle. By Brian Fatherly. Faber £12.95.

In the preface to his Mellon Lectures on Walpole, W S Lewis says: "Over thirty years ago I started off bravely to write his biography. As I wrote it I asked myself why should I try to say what he, himself, said so much better? ... Then, in the Thirties, Mr Ketton-Cramer came to write the biography that makes, I think, another full account of Walpole's life unnecessary."

Brian Fothergill makes no pretensions to original scholarship but he has drawn an entertaining portrait of Walpole and his friends who were succinctly described by Mrs Thrale: "I call these Fellows 'finger-twirlers'". He writes, "meaning a decent word for Sodomites". Whether she was right is hard to say; their sexual leanings are cloaked in a particularly English ambivalence. Could it have been just coincidence that the one married member of the two groups of friends, the Quadruple Alliance and the Out of

Town Party, was Oilly Williams, the only one who hadn't been at Eton?

The description of their trips to Italy, "hoops and hollas" in the Office, Horace with his "knees bent, and the feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor", makes engaging reading. One of the Out of Towners, George Selwyn, was famous for his wit and his neurophilia. The former has not survived but the latter was the source of Fox's death-bed quip: "If Mr Selwyn calls," he said, "show him up. If I'm dead he'll be glad to see him and if I'm dead he'll be glad to see me."

Walpole had a close relationship with his mother who died when he was nineteen. He always enjoyed the company of elderly ladies. His "Downy" among them Lady Suffolk, his neighbor at Marble Hill who had been the reluctant mistress of George III, and Mme du Delfand who fell in love with Walpole when she was in her seventies, over twenty years his senior.

Although Mr Fothergill's intention is to write about Walpole's set, Horace and Strawberry Hill are the heart of the book, and the description of how the Twickenham "plaything" - house was Gothicized by John Chute and the Strawberry Committee remains fasci-

nating, as does the establishment of the Strawberry Hill Press which was so important to Walpole who was, after all, the collector of virtue as well as the collector of virtue. The Press was inaugurated by the publication of Gray's last great ode, *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poetry*. The fact that these were not appreciated by the public was not Walpole's fault. He had written of them Horace Mann in Florence, "they are Greek, they are Pindaric, they are sublime - consequently I fear a little obscure."

Walpole's political career, his friendship with the Berrys and his old age are already well-documented but it is pleasant to be reminded that Strawberry Hill's papier-mâché and *rompe* flying bombs, and that on a still winter's day the Gothic gloom is undisturbed.

Jane Dorrell

William St Clair's enjoyable and informative *Lord Elgin and the Marbles* has just been republished as an Oxford Paperback (£4.50) with revisions which include recent developments to the Greek Government's campaign for the marbles' return.



"Audience offered us many opportunities for illustration. . . This watercolour is a double portrait of Nijinsky and Diaghilev. I wanted to show Nijinsky principally through the action of his shadow and a glimpse of his feet." Thus Milton Glaser in Milton Glaser: Graphic Design (Penguin £15.95), an impressive collection of this commercial artist's work with his own revealing commentaries.

Coming to terms

Elend. By Nicholas Gage. Collins £9.95. 470pp

One December some years ago, I spent a solitary week in a small mountain village in Northern Greece, not far from the tiny hamlet of Liu where the Elend of Nicholas Gage's book lived, brought up her children and died. Elend was Gage's mother, who was murdered by Greek Communist guerrillas in 1948 for organizing the escape of her children. This is a reconstruction of her life, an account of that period of Greek history, the story of Gage's search for her murderer and his attempt to come to terms with her death.

Northern Greece doesn't seem to have changed all that much since Elend's day. The village I visited could well have been the setting for Gage's loving and painstaking reconstruction of a childhood - his own - that he must scarcely be able to remember. He succeeds in completely recreating the reader in the traditions and rituals of daily village life: the marriage, birth and death ceremonies; the Christmas and Easter celebrations; the extreme

strictness governing the conduct of women and young girls; the folklore and the paganism.

This rich and deliberate narrative, written in the third person and interspersed with first person accounts, is what makes the book so readable and tempting, without weakening Gage's anguish and anger which drove Gage to research and write it in the first place. It is a story that taken any later would be too concentratedly awful, but like this, we feel all the more for Elend because we have become so involved with the minutiae of her life.

At the same time, *Elend* works on another level, as a thriller with the tension becoming almost unbearable as Gage gets closer and closer to confronting his mother's murderer whom he intends to kill. What he ultimately elects to do carries far more weight because, of course, this isn't a thriller, it's real. Gage wrote *Elend* to enable him to face his mother's death. He ends up having to face his own humanity and discovers revenge is by no means as simple as he originally believed.

Lucretia Stewart

Repression

Making Victorians. By Susan Lasdon. Gollancz £6.90. 0 575 03176 X.

At first glance, though painted by children rather than by a young adult, *Making Victorians* promises much the same delightful reading as *Mrs Hurst Denching*. Diana Sperling's water colour of Regency life, also published by Gollancz.

But whereas the latter depicted activities any of which could go wrong, and frequently did, producing deliciously humorous vignettes, the Drummond children, in paintings of great charm, often chose to show the darker side of a very different life.

Diana Sperling, born in 1791, was a child of the more carefree eighteenth century. Over 20 years later the Drummond children enjoyed no such freedom; and it is the future Queen's repressive childhood which Susan Lasdon investigates. It is a tale of miserable incarceration in remote nurseries, learning tedious exhortations by rote, weeping over their lessons, being beaten, deprived of little pleasures, or committed to solitary confinement. All done for Evangelical reasons, to sub the evil which those clergy believed all children were born possessed with. Some of the paintings show happy occasions and a delight in the fashionable clothing of the adults they



chose to record; but all too often the child is waiting for a beating or is back-board to correct his posture. It is a sad tale which explains much of the subsequent repressed behaviour of the Victorians, but as a fresh and minutely detailed record of a vanished world it is entirely fascinating.

Betty Tadman

A packed itinerary

Piper's Places. By Richard Ingrams and John Piper. Chatto and Windus £14.95 (£12.50 until 31 December 1983). To John Piper on his Eightieth Birthday. Edited by Geoffrey Elborn. The Stourton Press, 18 Royal Crescent, London W11. 0 903912 10 4.

War prelates art; during this century much work has been inspired by the experience, memory or anticipation of it. Around 1938 impending war drove John Piper away from abstraction and back to his earliest love: the topography and architecture of the darkening situation in Europe "made the whole pattern and structure of thousands of English sites more precious as they became likely to disappear". Richard Ingrams' book, written in collaboration with the artist, focuses on this central interest in Piper's work, and celebrates the many places he has recreated in collage, watercolours and oil. Text and illustrations combine to invite the reader's interest, not just in the art produced, but in the architecture and landscapes that inspired it. The book makes one want to travel, even if Piper's packed itinerary are beyond the capability of most; by the age of 14 he had visited every church in Surrey.

Ingrams' chief concern is topography and therefore he merely dashes in an outline of Piper's career. Anthony West's *John Piper* (1979) still remains the more substantial monograph on this artist, providing also a considered analysis of Piper's interest in technique. Where Ingrams makes a contribution is in his account of Piper's friendship with J M Richards, the editor of the *Architectural Review*, and John Betjeman. With Richards, Piper travelled England, sketching, taking photographs and making notes, not just of famous monuments, but also of pubs, lighthouses, harbours, forts and standing stones. Betjeman furthered his love of the rhetoric, his ability to find appeal in nondescript places. He developed an affectionate interest in English sites more precious as they became likely to disappear. Richard Ingrams' book, written in collaboration with the artist, focuses on this central interest in Piper's work, and celebrates the many places he has recreated in collage, watercolours and oil. Text and illustrations combine to invite the reader's interest, not just in the art produced, but in the architecture and landscapes that inspired it. The book makes one want to travel, even if Piper's packed itinerary are beyond the capability of most; by the age of 14 he had visited every church in Surrey.

hassock-scented interiors of country churches", as Betjeman puts it. By the fifties, Piper, like Sutherland, was at the height of his reputation. He began to accept commissions for stained-glass windows and this medium left its effect on his paintings, heightening his colour. His strong lines and growing facility sometimes irritated the critics, while his concern with the local continued to bring him accusations of insular provincialism. Popular yet much criticized, Piper's work is at the moment the subject of a large retrospective at the Tate Gallery. Ingrams' book has been published to coincide with this event, and though it is intellectually unambitious and rather flatly written, it will further appreciation of this artist's work.

The collection of letters in and essays on Piper, edited by Geoffrey Elborn as a tribute to the artist on his eightieth birthday is a more specialist interest. The contents are uneven: Henry Moore's contribution is disappointingly short and banal; R M Heuley's on the *Shelf*; Gilder and Patrick Reynolds' on the artist's way of life and work, vivid and informative. Had this book been illustrated with some of the plan and verve that characterizes Piper's art at his best, it would have provided a piquant introduction to a many-faceted artist.

Frances Spalding

BOOKS

Tolstoy by the score

The Tolstoy. By Nikolai Tolstoy. Twenty-Four Generations of Russian History 1353-1943. Hamish Hamilton £12.50, 0 241 10079 5.

All Stalin's Men. By Roy Medvedev. Translated by Harold Shukman. Basil Blackwell £8.95, 0 631 13348 8.

Nikolai Tolstoy, who was born in England in 1935, 15 years after his father's escape from the Russian Revolution, is best known for his *Vladimir Yuda*, a passionate indictment of the enforced collectivisation at the end of the last war of millions of unwilling Soviet citizens — the majority of them returning either to immediate execution or to more lingering deaths in the grim eyes of the Gulag archipelago.

Though on less controversial ground in this enigmatic and sometimes garish history, he brings to it the same narrative vigour and polemical force that attend all his books. In fact, this strong-mindedness (characteristic of all the Tolstoyes and amounting in some instances to fanatic obscurantism) very nearly precluded the author's very existence. In his last chapter, he tells how, in 1920, permission for British citizens to return to Russia by the Revolution to return home was eventually wrested from the Bolshevik authorities. Among the British subjects was Lucy St. John, the devoted English nanny of Dimitri Tolstoy, the author's father, then aged seven. With his mother dead and his father absent fighting for the White army, the boy would, if left behind, have enjoyed small prospect of survival. The British Chaplain in Moscow, charged with the registration of those entitled to leave, was persuaded — much to his own personal peril and indeed that of the whole scheme he was operating — to enrol the child as a British subject.

However, the further transmission of the Tolstoy genes was by no means yet assured. As the train rumbled up to Finland and safety, Lucy coached the boy in the proper English answers to the question, "What is your name?" "I am Tolstoy," he replied. "But you must not use that name. My name is Tolstoy."

However, when a party of Red Guards duly boarded the train and, in the compartment by which Tolstoy was travelling, they were confronted by a family of British citizens, pig-headed and, though, when she tried to answer for both of them, Lucy was removed from the compartment and obliged, in great agony of mind, to watch the interrogation proceed in dumb-show through the window. Dimitri's answers managed somehow to satisfy his inquisitors and they were allowed to proceed.

There are many incidents as colourful and suspenseful as that in this entertaining, if occasionally macabre chronicle. Impossible to generalize about the scores of Tolstoyes who crowd its pages; but, if required to compile an anthology of Tolstoy traits, one would certainly include extraordinary energy and lust for life (and plenty of plain lust as well); a daemonic forcefulness allied in the stubbornness of a mule; a certain aristocratic contempt for the conventional and the tame; intense family pride; extremity of word and deed and an egocentricity sometimes tipping over into positive egomania.

One has to say that, by and large, they seem to have been a pretty unprepossessing bunch. Even the greatest of them, Leo, who occupies a long central chapter, must have been a fairly uncomfortable person to know at close quarters, if only because of his chronic aneurysm of dirt and the peculiar rankness of his BO.

The founder of the family's fortunes, Peter Tolstoy, established them only by one of the basest betrayals on record. On Peter the Great's orders, he lured his estranged but totally innocent drop-out heir Alexei back to Russia with an absolute guarantee of forgiveness and renewed paternal favour. Once the luckless Tsarevich had recrossed the Russian frontier, his father promptly reneged upon his promise; and Peter Tolstoy, his pliant lackey, personally supervised the extraction of a false confession of treason from the unfortunate young man and his subsequent incarceration in prison.

His equi, if not in actual physical barbarity, at least in moral squalor.

was the much more recent Alexei Nikolovich, another Tolstoy author, who compensated for the middle-class upbringing forced upon him by a family scandal by becoming one of the Soviet regime's most fetid darlings, a status procured in his case by almost unimaginably abject degrees of grovelling before and sycophantic adulation, in speech and print, of the godhead Stalin. However, scores of flatterers quite as low and fawning failed, for their self-degradation, to escape liquidation in the Great Terror. Why was Alexei Nikolovich alone immune to purgation? Sheer snobbery on Stalin's part possibly, a canny realization of the unique imprimatur conferred on his regime by endorsement from the holder, even if unworthy, of so illustrious a name.

If, in his researches, Roy Medvedev has come across anything endearing in the characters or attractive in the careers of the six servants of the Soviet state who lives he briefly surveys, he has kept the knowledge to himself. Whether it is Voroshilov the soldier, Suslov the ideologue, Molotov the Foreign Minister or such all-purpose political tools as Mikoyan, Kaganovich and Malenkov, the record he presents is alike one of compliance in duplicity and connivance at tyranny: of fierce personal ambition subordinated to the despotic whims of Stalin and directed above all to maintaining that protean plasticity of soul that alone guaranteed survival amid the fluctuating winds of party dogma. But sometimes even these ever-complaisant and obsequious weathercocks were not able to veer fast enough to conform to the latest official line; and Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich were all ultimately condemned to that ideological death-in-life of expulsion from the party — a fate infinitely less cruel than that they had seen visited without protest upon or joined in engineering for — millions of their innocent fellow-countrymen.

The contrast between these grey, ignoble apparitions and those detailed by Nikolai Tolstoy could hardly be more extreme. Roy Medvedev's book is undeniably impressive in its unrelenting bareness, but is equally undeniably a valuable document.

Martin Fagg

PAPERBACKS

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13½. By Sue Townsend. Methuen £1.50, 0 413 53790 0.

Well, Adrian Mole, how you loved and suffered that year between nearly 14 and nearly 15, hovering on the brink of life and manhood. Oh the anguish of unrequited love for the delicious Patsy of the treacherous hair, whose parents read *The Guardian* and boy legless biseux, though her father's legsless in the company of the despair and humiliation of having to go out, maskless, when a colony of new spots has erupted on your chin! Oh the enduring sick ache in the heart when your mother is not as mothers on television are, and has not even washed your PE shorts when it is school tomorrow.

Dogged, uncompromising and hilarious, you detail to your dear diary how in the course of that year you became a one parent child, fell in love, first (of many) wet dreams, fell in love, tried French kissing, went back to the English kid, fostered a pensioner and were entered for four O levels and three CSEs, in between times sampling the greatest literature and becoming an intellectual.

So Malcolm Muggeridge never wrote back, but you made it at last, Adrian, not just on BBC radio last year, but into a column in *Woman's Realm*. Into hard covers and now triumphantly into paperback. Step up then to join the roll-call of the world's great teenagers, Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, Romeo and Juliet, Holden Caulfield, and yes — lover and intellectual — Adrian Mole.

Jessica Saraga

Those who have enjoyed the whimsical stories of Henry Livings in *The Guardian* can now savour a collection in book form — *Pennine Tales*, published by Methuen at £4.95.

Tom Corfe

lingo

Alcove and albatross, algebra and algorithm, alcohol and alkali are more than words that happen to begin with *al-*. They all came into English from Arabic, and the *al* is a particularly significant article, since it is the Arabic definite article, "the".

Alcove, thus, was originally *al-qubba*, "the arch". More complex is the albatross, which via Persian *albatraz*, "pelican" and the influence of Latin *albus*, "white", began as *al-qadus*, "the water jar", this referring to the pelican's espousal of the cross. Algebra literally means "the reduction", *al-jabr*, implying a mathematical reduction by means of equations, unlike the "concrete" arithmetic. Algorithm, the computation process, arose as a variant (influenced by Greek *arithmos*, "number") of another English word, algorithm, whose own Arabic origin lies in the name of the Persian mathematician al-Khwarizmi, "man of Khwarizm".

Adrian Room

Untamed and raw

The Vikings in History. By F Donald Logan. Hutchinson £15.00, 0 09 145190 6, £6.50, 145191 4.

Not one of those glamorous picture-books, not yet a scholarly analysis, this is simply a good, vigorous account of the great Scandinavian expedition. David Logan gets off to an over-the-hill start. He would transfer the Vikings, "vibrant, untamed and raw," from the periphery to the core of European development. "Dynamic and vital," they were, these "conquerors, at times destructive, young warriors, who sailed out of the fjords."

But adjectival romance soon gives place to sober narrative as Professor Logan tells of Viking activities in Europe and the Atlantic. Where there is controversy he judiciously summarises opposing views: did Irishmen or Vikings wreak greater havoc in Ireland? Was it the Rus who created Russia? He sets up and demolishes Aunt Sallys with enthusiasm. He enjoys telling of all those entertaining but long-explored American Viking hoaxes, and he rather overdoes the balchat-job on Alfred the Great's reputation.

Tom Corfe



A detail from "The Nativity" by Gerard David, one of the illustrations from Carols for Christmas compiled and arranged by David Wilcocks (Gollancz £9.95), in which family favourites are accompanied by works from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. A new paperback edition has just been published of The Faber Book of Carols and Christmas Songs (£3.25) arranged by Eric Rosebery.

Yan, tyan, tethera

Numbers: Their History and Meaning. By Graham Flegg. André Deutsch £14.95, 0 233 97282 X, £8.95, 97516 0.

While much of the factual material in this substantial volume can be available in a more compact form, the intelligent reader will find it a most useful and entertaining guide to the history of numbers.

But less meritorious is the way in which relatively familiar properties of numbers are illuminated and interrelated. Thus we are led to think again about the remarkable paradoxes of Zeno, or the ramifications of the Königsberg Bridge problem, magic squares or Pascal's triangle.

Again, why do we count as we do? An awareness of comparative size or quantity is perhaps instinctive. But, as Flegg points out, "the intellectual step taking us from counting to numbers in the abstract is a comparatively sophisticated one which came late in man's history. Counting was the first of a long succession of practical and intellectual steps which have led to the mathematics of today."

At some stage there was the natural association of numbers in a group with human physical features, or some form of "body or finger matching". Patterns and groupings, addition and multiplication can then be developed.

As for number counting, there are fascinating sidelights on varying customs in Asia (where the conventions for finger-counting in Japan differ from those in China) or Africa (Zulu and Tswana systems are cited) and elsewhere.

To those accustomed to counting in units and tens, there is particular interest in the sequences used for counting by fives or by twos, and the combinations that express the multiples and submultiples of such arrays. There are languages used, for instance, by South American Indians where one, two, five, six, seven, seventeen and so on become one, two, hand, hand-one, hand-two, three-hands-and-so on.

Aztec, it appears, have a typical "five-twenty" system, while in Nigeria the Igbo number-words are an example of twenty counting in which five has no special significance.

These revelations about such systems do suggest that they may not be wholly independent. Indeed some of the rhythms noted recall the way in which shepherds in some remote parts of Britain are reputed to use hylaric numbers. The adjective comes from writings by Chaucer H D Rawnsley, famed for his pioneer National Trust Work.

He translated one, two, three, four

as yan, tyan, tethera, methere, ten as dick, and eleven, twelve etc, as yan-a-dick, tyan-a-dick . . . There is scant evidence that this notation still persists now that local dialects are being suppressed by national broadcasting and other factors. Maybe international communication will mean the ultimate disappearance of such localisms.

However, the further transmission of the Tolstoy genes was by no means yet assured. As the train rumbled up to Finland and safety, Lucy coached the boy in the proper English answers to the question, "What is your name?" "I am Tolstoy," he replied. "But you must not use that name. My name is Tolstoy."

That the detail of a relatively technical topic can be presented in a form (scholarly, yet popular) that must attract mathematicians and non-mathematicians alike is a tribute to the literary skills of the author. Furthermore, his range is considerably wider than has so far been implied.

The extension of arithmetic to algebra, considerations of rational numbers and transcendental and of infinity and recurring decimals, recreational numbers and gematria are all detailed. (Gematria is here defined as "primarily the art of devising and reading secret codes designed by making permutations of the letters of words.")

There is much sage advice, too, for teachers. Is the swinging pendulum of mathematical curriculum reform in a proper position? Should it be recognized that for some children conventional methods of teaching mathematics are unsuitable, and that the subject is largely irrelevant to them? "Uniformity in education is inappropriate in a society made up of individuals with different abilities, different prejudices, different fears and different interests . . . History of mathematics provides a rich source of alternatives for those teachers who are genuinely concerned about the problems of numeracy today."

There is vastly more that could be abstracted from this cornucopia of wisdom and learning. Two small items must suffice.

Why do some numbers have superstitious associations? Why, for instance, the mysticism of seven, and why is thirteen unlucky? Interesting answers are provided.

And was the Falklands war correspondent who "counted them out and counted them in" echoing a couplet by Lord Byron, cited by Graham Flegg? "He counted at break of day — And when the sun set where they —"

F W Kellaway

BOOKS

Paperback writers

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Out of the Antipodes always something new, these days, and often something of quality. The Boundary Riders (Joan Phipson, illustrated by Margaret Horner, Puffin £1.50) is not exactly new, since it was first published in the early Sixties, and bears traces of feeling, particularly in its central character, the 13-year-old Bobby Dick of his name and his low rank in the pecking order, which lifts it above the simple holiday adventure it appears to be. Edward Arnold's Magpie Library produces some admirable easy reads with useful but not obtrusive morals concerned with making the best of new situations (Kate and the Horse Camp, Joan Dalgleish, illustrated by Margaret Power, Time Off, Sally Power, illustrated by Leslie Pattison £1.25 each) and respecting the beliefs of others and the demands of the country (The Sacred Tree, James G Porter, illustrated by Steve Hedderley, £1.25). This last is set in the nineteenth century and concerns a settler's children rescuing their father from the consequences of his offence against the natives.

He would be one of the people referred to as Inlanders in the most distinguished of these Antipodean books, indeed the most outstanding of this whole batch. The Book of Wirren is a three-part epic (The Tree is Coming, The Dark Bright Water, Behind the Wind, Susan Wrightson, Puffin Plus, each £1.50), which draws on the myths and folktales of the Aborigines to produce a fantasy of great freshness and distinction. Wirren begins the books a boy, and ends as something more than a man; in the interim he has

had encounters with a variety of extraordinary creatures, each of which lives by its own laws; this is fantasy on a grand scale, resonant in the imagination. It makes even the best everyday books about adolescence seem small. Jane Gardam's The Summer After the Funeral (Puffin Plus, £1.25) has the special flavour of her witty and allusive style, and a richly-drawn heroine, but I found it hard to be as charitable to the manoeuvres of Athene's mother as I was supposed to be. I found myself even more out of sympathy with the people in Jacob Have I Loved (Katherine Paterson, Puffin Plus, £1.25) but also I felt that it was rather a pretentious narrative, taking the material of the conventional small-town bildungsroman and making it seem more important by choosing a particularly bleak setting — a community on Chesapeake Bay living by crabbing — and giving the heroine a grandmother whose senile dementia is given a vicious colouring by religious mania, but not in fact attaining the real depth it claims.

A serious story with this ponderousness is unlikely to draw young people on from the really shallow stories that are flooding the market. The justification for the American series Sweet Dreams and Dark Forces is presumably, since they indicate reading level and interest age at the beginning, that they are designed to provide motivation for reluctant readers, but the quality of Tender Loving Care (Anne Park, Bantam, 75p) and The Bargain (Rex Sparger, Bantam, 85p) is depressing: we can do better for the slow-reading adolescent than this.

The Green Slime (Susan Saunders, illustrated by Paul Granger, Bantam Skylark, 85p), which is good sport. For such young readers, Jan Mark has produced a delightful story about the loss of old and start of new friendship. The Dead Letter Box (Young Puffin, 95p). Her reliability is phenomenal; alas, that of Dick King-Smith is less so, for after revealing in *The Fox-Busters and Doggy Dog* (1 found The Mouse Butcher (Puffin, 95p) a sad disappointment, so concerned with the minutiae of the most old-fashioned sort of English class-consciousness that all the fun and excitement of the adventures of the heroic peasant cat who keeps the cat community going after the humans have left is dulled.

For unfailing cat-and-mouse tales one turns to Graham Oakley: The Church Mice in Aetna (Pleasurem, £1.95) may be the mixture as before, but what a mixture! — the same being true of What-a-Mesa and the Cal-Next-Daer (Frank Muir, illustrated by Joseph Wright, Carousal, £1.25). A more moving account of the problem of convincing adults that you know what is going on better than they do comes in Robert Swindell's story World-Eater (Knights, £1.25), where it is the hero's loving knowledge of his pigments that enables him to save the world from disaster: ingenious, but a pity about the camp buddies. Fur slightly younger readers, the best but will be an admirable variant on the programmed book which is rapidly becoming a commonplace: in *Be an Interplanetary Spy* (Seth McEvoy, illustrated by Mare Hempel and Mark Wheatley, Bantam, 95p) you don't simply have to make choices between alternate strategies, you have to solve problems and puzzles — a more educational experience and a great deal of fun. Bantam also produce some more conventional programmed books, including one for quite young readers,

you have only just begun, or even not begun at all yet. Molly Moves Out (Susan Penrose, illustrated by Steven Kallag, Hippo, £1.25), with its clear print and story of the importance both of independence and family love, is for the beginning reader. For the beginning beginner, Eric Hill's splendid out-book *Where's Spot?* and *Spot's First Walk* (Picture Puffin, each £1.95) are delicious, while Jan Ormerod's *Moonlight* (Picture Puffin, £1.25), a companion to the equally engaging *Sunshine*, and at least one of John S. Goodall's wordless tales (*Jacko* etc, Picturem, £1.65) should be in every pre-reader's stocking, and so, for listening to, should The Christopher Robin Verse Book (A A Milne, illustrated by E H Shepard, Magnet, £1.50).

The most exciting piece of non-fiction about is *Deuter Who — the Making of a Television Series*, (Alan Road, Puffin, £1.95), which gives a strong sense of the complexities behind a television programme by focusing on one particular adventure of the Timeford. Otherwise, while *Dinosaur* the imprint give us *Albion's* hand, some illustrated nature books. *The Year Around Us* (£3.95), from Orson comes a whole book of *Dinosaur* Riddles (Joseph Heck, illustrated by Rindoff Hoffman, £1.25); I now know that dinosaurs generate more had jokes than elephants. They are closely followed, however, by *Johnny Ball*, whose *Plays for Laughs* (illustrated by Colin West, Puffin, £1.25) provides young comedians with some relentlessly facetious scripts.

Audrey Laski

Looks natural

It is logical, perhaps, that as humans destroy the rest of the living world by their own unchecked increase, vanishing forms of life find a new importance in books — books, moreover (as these few demonstrations of real understanding and quality: One such is *Hedgehog* by Eric Thomas and John T. White (Dorling Kindersley £4.95), a large, beautiful book which makes impact straight away by looking like its subject. From the splendid (laminated) cover — a close and detailed view of a single wild summer green — through the superb double-pages and stunning four-page pull-outs of hedgehogs through the seasons (every flower mapped and named at the end), Eric Thomas's intensely realized paintings could bewitch almost any reader into absorbed attention. In text and pictures we follow the life and role of a hedgehog from its first making in Saxon times, through the years of local and national history (the Black Death, the Enclosures, farming changes); and we see how its going destroys a complex and valuable web of life. The pages are rich in facts: human (sources of medicine, techniques of hedging and ditching), as well as those concerning creatures and plants. A question to Mr. White: John Clare the Northampton poet was once employed planting hedges. Do any from his hand survive? A book for all ages — and a bargain too.

The fact that *The Mouse Book* (Oriel/Routledge £3.95) is by David Bellamy gives it a good lead start. But do not expect an easy vocabulary or a childlike approach. The engaging narrator, a long-tailed field mouse

(*Apodemus Sylvaticus*) whose life we track, discovers quite soon that he is "different from most other mice, a part of the variation that is the very essence of any natural population, the one in every ten million individuals which chance has set apart". Thus he is at once something of a bohemian, a philosopher, and an observer of the world. "As a mouse," admits Bellamy, "I can say things I would be too much of a coward to say myself." And that's the key to the whole. Certainly, his botanical-ethical thinking apart, our mouse shares the usual tastes and hazards of his kind. But he also admires the stars, accepts evolution, observes the mating mice, and an observer of the world. "As a mouse," admits Bellamy, "I can say things I would be too much of a coward to say myself." And that's the key to the whole. Certainly, his botanical-ethical thinking apart, our mouse shares the usual tastes and hazards of his kind. 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PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral-academic split

Peter Ribbins on the origins and purpose of the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education

Since the fifties, our educational institutions have experienced what amounts to a "pastoral revolution", designed, it seems, to provide a caring and supportive environment in which all students are known and valued, helped when necessary, and enabled to develop the personal, social and vocational skills they need.

Almost every secondary school now has some kind of formal pastoral care structure, thousands of teachers hold posts of special responsibility, and tens of thousands more take on a tutorial role. How well prepared and supported are such staff?

The limited evidence available is unimpressive. Until recently this dimension of schooling was generally neglected by educationists and social scientists alike. Few, if any, appoint advisers for their expertise in pastoral care and no HMIs carry a specific, designated responsibility for pastoral care. Finally, as Marland (1983) has shown in a paper in the inaugural edition of *Pastoral Care in Education*, the provision of both initial and in-service training for those with pastoral responsibilities is pitifully inadequate. One example must suffice. In the HMI (1982) survey of *The New Teacher in School*, only 9 per cent of respondents felt "inadequately prepared" to teach their subject specialism, whereas a massive 54 per cent believed this to be true of their pastoral duties.

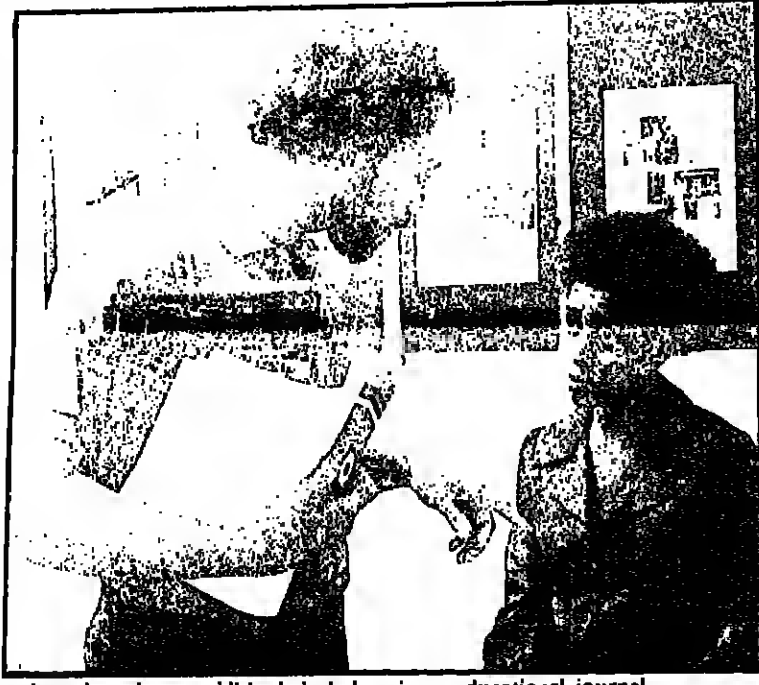
It was against this bleak background that the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education emerged. Over 300 teachers attended its inaugural conference in Dudley at the end of 1982 and since then its membership has shot up to over 2,000. NAPE's aims are: to promote the education, training, and development of those engaged in pastoral care; to disseminate

good practice in pastoral care in education; to secure the appropriate resources for pastoral care in schools and colleges; to encourage the theoretical study of, and research into pastoral care.

During 1983, national, regional and local bodies within the Association have promoted numerous conferences, courses, meetings of teachers, and specialist activity groups, many of which have been attended by large numbers of teachers. Later this month NAPE plans to hold its first annual conference which has been organized by Keith Blackburn and is to take place at Sheffield Polytechnic. Next February, with the help of a grant from the Social Science Research Council, a joint NAPE/Warwick University research seminar organized by Michael Marland and Peter Long on "Future Research Needs in Pastoral Care" is to be held. This is the first seminar of its kind. The Association has also sponsored an urgently needed exploratory investigation into the nature and extent of training provision for pastoral care. This is being undertaken by Ron Best and Peter Maher and it is hoped that this will lead to a larger and better funded research project in the future.

Crucial to the development of the Association is its journal *Pastoral Care in Education* which is published in association with Basil Blackwell and is now in its fourth edition. In their inaugural editorial, the editors (Peter Ribbins, Maura Healy and Peter Lang) expressed the hope that the journal would act as a significant means of disseminating information and exchanging views and make a contribution to raising the level of debate about pastoral care.

To date 36 articles and 22 book



reviews have been published, including contributions from people working in all parts of the educational system (HMI, i.e. a. inspectorate, education psychology services, The Grubb Institute, primary and secondary schools, HE and FE colleges, polytechnics and universities) and at all levels within schools (tutors, heads of house and of year, heads of subject departments, deputies, and heads). Twenty of the papers have been contributed by practitioners. Thus fears that the journal would be taken over by academics have, happily, proved groundless. For several authors their papers are the first they have tried to have published

in an educational journal.

The first four editions have included a wide range of feature articles on such topics as the role of the tutor and the pastoral middle manager; active tutorial and other kinds of group work; the attitudes of pupils; the needs of various groups of pupils ("difficult", "disruptive", "academic"); induction; option choice; assemblies; pastoral or welfare curriculum; and on the relationship between the pastoral, the disciplinary, the academic and the administrative dimensions of schooling.

One or two teachers have expressed their opposition to the setting up of a

professional association concerned with pastoral care. They appear to belong to a small but influential minority who have elevated the idea of the "pastoral-academic split" to cult status. Any attempt to distinguish the academic work of the school from the pastoral is dismissed as divisive, conceptually naive, and practically unhelpful to teacher and pupil alike.

Such a view is rejected implicitly by many of those who have contributed to the Journal and explicitly by Best and Ribbins (1983) in a paper entitled "Re-thinking the Pastoral-Academic Split". They argued that such attempts to denigrate the "pastoral-academic split" contain an element of truth but, at a more fundamental level, are based on an inadequate conceptualization of pastoral care and on its relationship with the other main dimensions of schooling. The issues at stake are not, or at least not exclusively, academic. The vague for denigrating the "split" can and has been exploited by those in authority hard pressed to make ends meet in the face of cuts in educational expenditure and falling rolls. In these circumstances, the dissolution ("rationalization") of pastoral systems may well be an attractive policy option and the case against the split might provide the theoretical justification for the dismemberment of what are, in fact, quite effective systems of care.

The National Association for Pastoral Care in Education and its Journal have a unique role to play in the development of pastoral care. Their influence will extend far beyond the association's immediate membership, and will shape the practice of many teachers who may never think of, or may actively reject, the idea of joining NAPE.

PASTORAL CARE

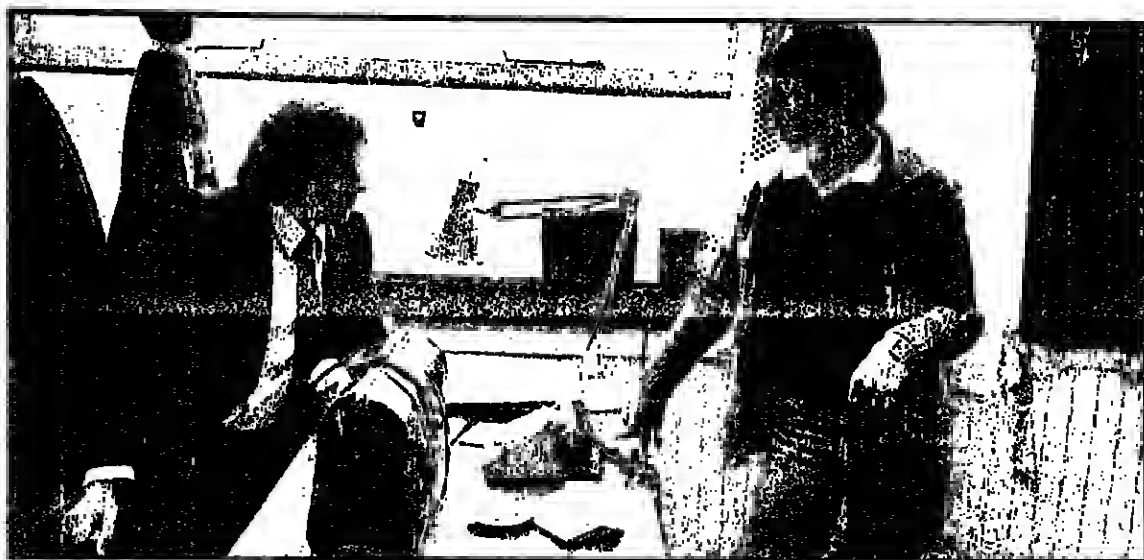
New life for an overworked word

Jessica Saraga on three contrasting systems of care

There is no standard practice in school pastoral care. Dick Smith, who is a head of house at a large London mixed comprehensive feels there's been a shift recently to a greater emphasis on learning support rather than what might be called emotional first aid. Circumstances have altered. The main problem used to be coping with ROSLA when whole generations of 15-year-olds simply didn't want to be there at all since they could, in those days, be out earning. In those days there was up to 25 per cent staff turnover every year. Not any more. Unemployment means a more stable staff and a concern that pupils should achieve their full academic potential to compete in the job market. Thus pastoral care means identifying what gets in the way of learning and devising strategies to improve it.

The pastoral system at Elliot School operates as a discipline, just like English or maths; there is a pastoral curriculum followed in daily tutorial periods by the tutor groups which are at present vertical house groups - though there are plans to move, largely because of falling rolls, to the more conventional year groups. The pastoral curriculum follows the school year, focusing at different times on induction of first years, third year options, A level subjects, careers, study skills, exams and revision. Intervened with this are each tutor's own choice of topics relating to aspects of life in the school.

Coordinating it all are the heads of houses, lucky to have an office each where they spend more lunch hours than they spend in the staff room, available to anyone with something on their mind, or who might want to drop in for a chat. Accessibility is considered crucial, but there are always those who don't come, though it's not usually difficult for teachers to detect a pre-occupation which is getting in the way of school work. Here the role of the house head is to find a teacher who'll seem approachable. Who teaches him? Who knows her through sport, through the house, through clubs or drama? There is a strong



emphasis too on maximum possible consultation with parents, who are invited to visit whenever something seems to need discussion.

It's the house heads too who tend to be on the end of the line in terms of discipline and punishment. Dick Smith feels there's no conflict between the disciplinary and the pastoral role which are two faces of the same coin, and provided justice is even-handed, are seen to be so. Literally wielding the big stick though is something they never do; Elliot's no corporal punishment policy pre-dates the rest of ILEA by some years. This stand on corporal punishment and the statement the school has formulated condemning racism and sexism all reflect the valuing of the individual which is the baseline of the pastoral system. People are important; learning is important; relationships are important, but you have to work at them, whether you're the teacher or the taught. But Dick Smith is optimistic: he thinks the pastoral system works - not least of its achievements, and a tribute to liaison with social services and the Juvenile Bureau, is the lowest juvenile crime figures in the division. Next year as a

head of first year he'll be adding to the foundations of pastoral care by increasing contact with the feeder primary schools and discussion with their heads about Elliot's first year curriculum.

Mike Legg took over coordination of pastoral care at the John Fisher School, a Catholic boys' school in the London Borough of Sutton when it was founded in 1977. He is also head of geography and teaches a full timetable, where Dick Smith teaches about two-thirds. He takes direct charge in pastoral terms of the sixth form, particularly UCCA and entry into higher education, though there are two other teachers responsible for careers who control the job-experience programme and job-search preparation.

Mike Legg sees pastoral care as something which in this country has always been associated with schooling anyway; there has never been a division between instruction and caring, nor should there be. However, a formal structure provides a focus and a channel of communication for the kind of awareness which is already there of the pupils as individuals. The structure

here is both vertical in houses and horizontal in years.

The pastoral relationship begins at Elliot before a boy has started at the school, with liaison with feeder primaries. When the new intake arrives it's divided into forms which correspond with houses. House activities provide a sense of identity and a chance to get to know house teachers outside the classroom. Initially this works well, but by the time a boy reaches year III, sets and options preclude much continuation in this mode. Ideally the form teachers should remain linked to a house and continue contact with their early forms, but turnover and timetable constraints often put paid to this.

Ideally too, the form teachers should all be Catholics, since pastoral care in a Catholic school inevitably has a religious dimension, but this isn't achieved either, and so while there is a Christian base to the pastoral relationship it's not always a specific one. Nevertheless, one of the concerns is liaison with the parishes and confirmation (all the boys are Catholic) despite a little local difficulty because of intake from both the diocese of Southwark

and the diocese of Arundel and Brighton which have different views on confirmation age. The school is unlucky with boundaries; the borough one between Sutton and Croydon runs through a classroom block so while the school is funded by Sutton it takes more pupils from Croydon, and some from Surrey which is just down the road too.

Tutorial periods at John Fisher are once a week and Mike Legg has devised a programme of suggestions for each year. One week the slot might be filled by an outside speaker, perhaps from the police on social problems, another week might see a discussion on homework or other study-related topics, or an individual counselling session.

At an independent girls' school in South London the pastoral system is very much more low key and informal. They don't even refer to it by that name but agree with Mike Legg that teaching in this country reflects a traditional belief in the liberal, caring nature of education. The pastoral relationship is important, but it is built on everyday subject teaching and form tutor contact. In a similar school this informal approach tends to be successful; there seems to be no need for a formalized structure. With fee-payers some of the more immediate material problems of family splits, for instance, are less likely to arise, and the middle classes often tend to be coopers at least on some levels. Of course there are emotional problems, and the ethos is one of sensitivity to them; the school tends to spot anxieties for instance, before the parents do. But study skills and learning support are tackled in the context of subject teaching.

One thing the three schools have in common is the cure. Caring is an overworked word, but it's quite clear that in all these schools it means not just monitoring pupils' development, not just intervening when this seems to be inhibited, but inspiring trust, accepting responsibility, and bridging the gap between instruction and education in its fullest sense.

What not to do

Teaching in Britain: A Reader. By A. W. Bolger. Batsford £7.95. 0 7134 3702 2.

Anthony Bolger has performed a useful service in putting together a collection of writings on the general theme of counselling. There are some 30 substantial contributions, linked by brief commentary, ranging from counselling in education (schools and, after school), through counselling for work, in personal matters (abortion counselling, mid-life crisis, marital sexual problems), in medical settings (the general practitioner, the health visitors and a counselling service for nurses in training) to counselling by clergy.

All the articles are well-referenced and there is a general bibliography and a good index. The selection is wide-ranging and includes articles on both the philosophy and the practice of counselling. Inevitably the articles vary in style, clarity and persuasiveness, but it will no doubt be helpful to all those who are pleased to call themselves counsellors, or who have ambitions in that direction, to have such a collection between the covers of one book.

The articles dealing with the philosophy (e.g. "the faith of the counsellor", "the concept of counselling") and with ethical and moral questions ("responsibility of the counsellor") are the most revealing. The most interesting are the articles describing counselling practice, especially when the practitioner feels able to express some doubt or misgiving about what Paul Halmos, referring to the activities of earlier clergy, doctors and lawyers, calls "meddling with other people's private business".

But, of course, meddling is just what counsellors don't do. There is a great deal in the collection about what counsellors don't do, which doesn't, alas, clarify what they do. One complete section is devoted to the question of definition and most of the other articles spend some space trying to define what counselling is. Despite all this effort, the position remains unclear. The weight of opinion seems to be that the word should be used adjectivally, as in "counselling psychology", "counselling social

work", "counselling teaching", even so, other contributors, in describing their work with retarded readers, write of one group of children who "received counselling".

Paul Halmos finds it useful to distinguish between "counselling" and "counseling". Perhaps Jean MacKintosh puts it best when she writes of the dilemma of subjecting an activity which depends for its success on "interpersonal warmth, empathy and spontaneity" to "an in-depth training course". She goes on "it is a dilemma which seems unlikely to be resolved as long as 'counselling' remains undefined, amorphous and flexible to the point of incoherence".

However, there are hints throughout the book as to how we may see daylight again. More than once, in describing pieces of research, it becomes clear that the researchers are being good teachers, doctors, clergy, psychologists with time to devote to their clients. It may be that "counselling" cannot be practised in a vacuum and that what is needed is not to try to turn a general human activity into a specialism, but to give improved training in all teachers, doctors, nurses, police, shop stewards, works supervisors et al, and give them time to use their training properly.

The core conditions for effective counselling are empathy, genuineness and non-possessive warmth (quoted by A. G. Walls in his article "Counselling in work settings - areas and issues"). One might have wished for more felicitous phrasing, but if these really are the core conditions it would be difficult to imagine any effective teacher, for example, managing without them.

This is probably not the conclusion Anthony Bolger meant should be reached when he undertook to bring together "a closely integrated collection of the most significant British writings in the field" (publisher's blurb), but he himself quotes R. R. Carbutt who stated: "There is extensive evidence to indicate that lay persons can be trained to function at minimally facilitative levels of conditions related to constructive client change".

Isobel Shepherdson

Help lines

Counselling Young People. By Ellen Noonan. Methuen £10.95. 0 416 36210 9. £4.95. 36220 6.

It is one of those pious truisms of education that just as all teachers are teachers of language, so all teachers are counsellors. Pastoral care is inevitably and desirably an aspect of our relations with the young, whether it is institutionally recognized and rewarded or not. Those who are best at it often claim that it only needs the capacity to be a good listener, or deny Freudian theory while unconsciously using it. Others remark that the kids get over their difficulties simply by growing up.

But beyond our hit-and-miss approaches, there exists a quasi-profession of counselling, with a tradition and a literature of its own, and of course, a scheme of training. The author of *Counselling Young People* is both a counsellor for students and a trainer of counsellors in the University of London Extra-Mural Department, and her practice is rooted in the psycho-analytical tradition of Donald Winnicott and Melanie Klein.

Though she disclaims the notion that she has provided a textbook, she has

sought to compile a guide to the theory, practice and professional behaviour for students and therapists in that tradition, for "those who consider counselling as only one part of their work", as well as other people working in educational institutions, since most young people seeking help are students at one level or another.

In fact, unlike some of the literature in this field, this is an unpretentious and undogmatic book with a series of case history vignettes which many readers will find to be a reflection of their own experience with the troubled young. People in a pastoral role in sixth form or further education colleges will immediately recognize Ellen Noonan's examples of the particular dilemmas of counselling in organizations.

To people who have had the counselling task thrust upon them and are conscious of the pitfalls of this kind of relationship with people in distress, this will be a useful book. At every degree of sophistication the advice gently given will help them avoid actually worsening the situation of their clients and will probably help them achieve some degree of success.

Collin Ward

Two books on pastoral care have recently been published in Heinemann's *Organisation in Schools* series, edited by Ron Best, Colin Javis and Peter Ribbins. *Perspectives on Pastoral Care* (£9.50) begins by defining the concept of pastoral care and outlining the nature and extent of the problem. It goes on to consider strategies for care, describes different aspects of guidance and counselling and tackles the problem of whether caring and learning must exist as different functions.

Education and Care: The Study of a School and its Pastoral Provision (£12.50), is the result of two years' research at an English comprehensive school. It looks at the "conventional wisdom" of pastoral care, and proceeds, by means of a combination of case studies and general discussion, to investigate teachers' attitudes towards their pastoral roles, and the particular difficulties experienced. Considera-

tion is then given to the impact made by the changing ideologies of different headteachers, whose attitudes to the subject are closely examined.

Three new titles in the Souvenir Press *Horizon* series will be of particular use to those working in special education. *Behaviour Problems in Handicapped Children*, by Malcolm C. Jones (£7.95) is an account of the Beech Tree House approach to severe problems of adjustment: behaviour modification in its most humane form. In *Physical Education for Handicapped Children*, Sarah J. George and Brian Hart describe the imaginative programme in operation at Cedar School, in Hampshire. Mike Cotton's *Outdoor Adventure for Handicapped People* offers a compilation of articles by experts on a variety of sports and hobbies. (Each book is available in both hardback and paperback at £7.95 and £4.95.)

Counsel work

Guidance: 16-19. By Douglas Hamblin. Basil Blackwell £12.50. 0 631 13362 7. £4.95. 13361 9.

Douglas Hamblin, to anyone who knows of his writings or who has worked with him, is obviously a good counsellor, a good teacher of counselling and a good humanist. This latest book is no contradiction. Although entitled "Guidance", its main thrust is non-directive counselling, but even that is extended for negotiation with the teachers and counsellors. The text is well-organized with clearly stated objectives for each chapter, together with examples to consider, test and adapt to one's own situation. In fact the text is non-specific to situation or role so that face-to-face work and group sessions are covered. Individual counsellors, group leaders as well as "mainstream" teachers will gain from it, either considering it on their own or in development groups. All this is to be commended.

References to material developed on a course in 1972, and to a pop group called The Animals, are perhaps out of date, but this is a minor criticism. More importantly, I felt that the book seriously under-considered the works (during the last four or five years) from CRAC, NICEB, the FEU, and Tony Watts and John Miller in particular. In his introduction Douglas Hamblin says: "current discussions of post-16 courses stress negotiation, contractual relationships and formative form of assessment which puts guidance and counselling at the heart of education. I hope that this book reflects these changes to some degree". Well, I would have hoped so too, but the modern curriculum thinking that puts counselling at the core of all teachers' work with 16 to 19-year-olds is just not integrated to Douglas Hamblin's text. There is little encouragement to chase the best available works.

If I were planning a course for teachers and counsellors, I would make extensive use of these texts, but I would also use Douglas Hamblin's. Russ Russell

Questioning assumptions

Educational Systems for Disruptive Adolescents. By Keith Topping. Croom Helm £14.95. 0 7099 2435 6. £135. 2436 4. *Counselling: A Skills Approach.* By E. A. Munro, R. J. Mantel and J. J. Small. Methuen £2.95. 0 456 03130 8.

Until recently, the response from a school to a difficult or disruptive adolescent may well have been to "send for the experts", bring in the psychologist and there will either be a "cure" or the child will quietly disappear into the "more suitable" educational environment of a special school or unit.

Keith Topping sets out to show that this is not necessarily the answer. First, he reminds us that under the terms of the new Education Act, schools will be increasingly required to deal with difficult pupils themselves; and secondly by pointing to the available research data, he suggests that ordinary schools may produce much better results than the existing alternative provision.

The author does not dismiss the value of, nor the need for, special educational systems but he does question their cost-effectiveness and he re-examines the results produced by classroom teachers in mainstream schools. Aware of the pressures upon school staffs, Topping does not advocate a time-consuming or time-consuming

techniques of behaviour modification which have been successful in those schools where there has been an open-minded and flexible approach. On reading the introduction to this book, one might fear that the author's prime concern was with the cost of special provision; it quickly becomes clear, however, that what he is questioning is effectiveness. In a time of scarce resources and high public

expectation, Topping is looking for systems which are most successful in meeting the needs of both the children and their schools. He suggests that off-site units may have relieved schools of their problems but that they may also have led to educational complacency. The removal of disruptive pupils may, in some cases, have removed also the need for schools to re-examine the way in which they work and the educational experiences they offer.

Topping questions the desired outcome of working with disruptive children. If success is measured by return to normal schooling, he says, previous systems have failed. They have provided a streamlined route out of mainstream education and a very uncertain one back.

This book lists and examines all the existing educational systems for disruptive adolescents in this country and America. While it does reflect the author's bias towards behavioural psychology, his conclusions are drawn from an impressive catalogue of research. There are useful references to research projects which, while not claiming to be conclusive or exhaustive, could provide practical help for the classroom teacher. The book is refreshingly free from jargon and its sections are clearly summarized.

Whether educationists agree with Topping's conclusions or not, they must surely be challenged by his findings. In removing some of the mystique from the work of psychologists and teachers in special education, the author is not devaluing their worth. He seems to be suggesting that most mainstream schools should deal most effectively with disruptive adolescents, precious time should be freed for the specialists to work in other areas of education.

Counselling - A Skills Approach is

Jane Harvey

What, when, how

Head of House, Head of Year. By Keith Blackburn. Heinemann Educational Books £9.50. 0 435 80081 7.

This is the latest volume in the influential *Organization in Schools* series under the general editorship of Michael Marland. It is nearly a decade since the publication of Keith Blackburn's *The Tutor*, so it provides a late, but nevertheless welcome link in the literature about pastoral care. Although the book deals with the head of year's role and looks at it from the point of view of a newly-appointed, or aspiring, person, there are plenty of case studies which illustrate the complexity and subtleties of the job.

The emphasis on the "organization man" is reinforced by the lists of responsibilities in the examples from particular schools in the detailed appendices. In these there is a depressing preponderance of "checking on", "record keeping", "organizing", "registering", "collating", "reporting", "coordinating", "liaising", "arranging" and generally progress chasing. Is there no escape for the student from the vigilance of the pastoral system? This "managerial" view of the work is perhaps a welcome endnote in the mawkish sentimentality of some earlier outlooks. However, there is a strong argument for encouraging those with pastoral responsibilities to create systems which allow time for the tutors to get to know, understand and work with their students and to help them develop and gain confidence.

The pastoral curriculum, and particularly "active tutorial work", is intended to facilitate the student's competence to communicate, study, understand a variety of relationships, cope with stresses and difficulties, and to grasp opportunities. The need for this structure is emphasized but some

schools have moved on to question whether this work just becomes another facet of tuition and gets in the way of sensitively understanding individual students.

Keith Blackburn's head of year is expected to adapt to, and embrace, the changing needs of the school. He or she is required to keep the school's formulated aims before the members of the pastoral team and to play a part in the "group maintenance role". This includes having a checklist of who does what, when and how, ensuring that meetings are seen as important, well thought out, minuted and organized.

The pastoral head is responsible for the in-service education of staff, and the development of schemes to help students learn how to plan a variety of experiences for themselves. Keith Blackburn urges, too, the induction of probationers and new members of staff to tutorial work. He realizes the difficulties of "winning over" staff who feel they do not have the skills to cope. This book sets out comprehensively a variety of frameworks and styles of organization. There are some aspects which might have been dealt with more fully: pregnancy and abortion, the value of knowledge of students' interests and activities outside school and a more detailed exploration of the issues surrounding "open files". There are few responsibilities which have not been touched on, or only in passing, but which deserve thorough attention by pastoral teams: how to help students negotiate, compile their own profiles, comment confidently and authoritatively on those prepared by teachers and how to develop their own strategies for mutual support.

This is a valuable book for the staffroom library and required reading for all heads of year.

Anthony Locke

RESOURCES

It's my impression that special activities laid on by museums, education services are somewhat curtailed this year. Provision varies enormously, depending on local authority priorities and museum staffing. Some museums clearly have a longstanding policy of holiday programmes, which they are doing their best to maintain; others just may not have the resources. Here's a selection from different parts of the country. In most cases events are free.

BIRMINGHAM
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, (021-235 4051). Birmingham is always to be congratulated on the range of its activities, though this year these are only taking place at the main city museum while in previous years there have also been programmes organized at the subsidiary museums in the Birmingham area.

"Print Your Own Christmas Card" using the museum's old printing press) is the activity on December 23, from 10.30-12.30. This is open to all ages. On December 30, 10.30-12.30, for all ages, from 10.30-12.30 and 2.00-3.30, there's "Stories for Christmas", a series of activities and story readings related to a new display of ceramics. The new ceramics gallery is the location for "Make A Plate" on January 4, 10.30-12.30 and 2.00-4.00. Children of all ages will have the opportunity to draw and make a collage.

In "Tile Patterns and Gallery Trails" on January 6, 10.30-12.30 and 2.00-4.00, children can take a close look at the museum's collection of tiles and help make a tile mosaic.

In Gallery 17 there's a special spinning and weaving workshop connected to the Ethel Mairet exhibition, on December 29, from 10.30-12.30 and 2.00-4.00. This is to be conducted by members of the Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers and is for children of all ages. "Robin Redbreast and Other Winter Birds" - a close look at the birds to be found in gardens during winter months - is in Gallery 57 on January 3, 4, 5 and 6, from 10.30-12.30 and 2.00-4.00.

Light the Christmas tree on January 5 offers an entertainment for children of all ages and their parents. The Age of Gold will play the music - with re-creation of a Victorian winter's afternoon of songs and story-telling. Tea will be served during the concert. Gallery tours for children aged 8-14 will take place on January 3, 4, 5 and 6, starting at 11.00 and at 2.00, and on different subjects each day. These aim to give children insights into different aspects of the museum's collections. Children should meet the guide in the Round Room. All of these events and activities are free.

CARDIFF
At the National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff (0222-397951) there are informal activities throughout the holidays, with crayons, worksheets and quizzes relating to the museum's various departments: botany, geology, art and archaeology.

LIVERPOOL
Merseyside County Museums, William Brown Street, Liverpool (051-207 0001) have corn dolly making as the theme of their main activities. On January 5 there's a demonstration of the traditional craft, from 10.00-4.30 in the Humanities Gallery. In conjunction with this, corn dolly making sessions for children and adults are being run throughout the holiday period on January 6. A small craft fair will be held in the museum shop, with tickets to be issued on the day at the Museum Shop. On January 3 and 4 there's a pottery throwing demonstration, and quizzes and film shows are being run throughout the holiday period.

NORWICH
The Castle Museum, Norwich (0603-22233) has a traditional Punch and Judy show with Professor Guy Richardson on December 29 from 2.30-3.30. On December 29 from 2.30-3.30 the No Nonsense Theatre presents *The Mariner of Maria Mureti in the Red Barn*, which is a musical version of a popular Victorian melodrama, with a theatre workshop for children of all ages.

"North American Indians in Winter" is the subject of a talk illustrated with original costumes and tools on December 30 at 10.15 for ages 6-11.

There is a tradition of 30 children, but a recent performance will be arranged later in the morning if there is demand. It will be followed up by a practical session at 2.00. Throughout the holidays there's also a special exhibition of dolls, organized by local doll makers, with a programme of practical demonstrations arranged by the White Rose Doll Makers' Circle - to include wigmaking, making masks and hands, peg dolls and finger puppets.

STOKE-ON-TRENT
At the City Museum and Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley Stoke-on-Trent (0782-29611) the December exhibition is "Four Local Artists".

The holiday programme at the Bethel Green Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, E2 (01-981 2415) is as varied as ever. On December 28 at 2.30 there's "Christmas Trees: songs, stories and things to

2-6. Children can choose from a range of subjects: there's a drama workshop (ages 7-12), print-making (ages 9-14), children's painting - magic topshop (ages 6-11), sculpture (ages 9-14) and pottery (ages 7-11). Hours are 10.30-3.30 and the week's course fee is £30. Advance enrolment is advised.

"Heaven Sent" is the title of the series of events at the Geoffrey Museum, Kingsland Road, E2 (01-739 8368), with the accent on perfumes and spices. There is a perfume-making workshop on December 22 and December 23, with carols in the afternoon. These day-long activities run from 11.00-12.30 and 2.00-4.00. They are for children of seven upwards. The museum will also provide children's puzzles through the holiday period.

Kenwood House, Hampstead Lane, NW3 (01-348 1286) invites children to take part in "Lighting the Kenwood Christmas Tree" daily from Monday

ing and recording hidden archaeological sites; at 2.30 "Bugs, Bones and Botany" is the subject of a workshop. "Straight Out of the Earth" is a workshop which will give children the chance to inspect some recent finds of Roman and Medieval objects.

This is at 12.00 on January 4, while at 2.15 there's a gallery talk "Digging in the City" and at 3.00 an "Underground Walkabout" setting out to explore the Roman Fort Gate and the Crypt of St. Mary-le-Bow Church. "Saving London from the Bulldozer" is the workshop at 12.00 on January 5, followed by a talk on London's early harbour at 2.15, and at 3.15 an "Underground Walkabout" exploring the Roman Fort Gate and the Crypt of the Guildhall.

Events on January 6 start with an illustrated talk at 12.00 on how people lived in Roman London, then at 2.00 a walkabout looking at "Ancient Cloth and Textiles Discovered in the City"

in advance, and children aged 8-11 will get priority.

There's also a quiz for children: "Seeing Things", in which ghost-like figures and other mysterious objects feature, such as the extra foot in the Arncliffe Marriage or the disappearing cat in Gainsborough's portrait of his daughters. The quiz caters for all age groups and is available free from the Orange Street entrance between December 27 and January 8. Linked with it is a Ghost Story Competition in which children complete a story cartoon with a ghostly theme. Prizes of paint boxes are to be won.

An entertainment with an underlying ecological theme runs at the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7 (01-589 6323) between January 3-15. *Under the Garden* will be presented by the Nuffield Puppet Theatre Company at 11.00 and 2.30 Monday-Friday, and at 3.00 on Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets cost £1 and can be booked in advance by telephone (ext 795). The performance is most suited to ages 4-11.

"A Loyal Entertainment" is to be found at the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, WC2 (01-930 1552) on January 4, 5 and 6 from 1.15-4.30. The theme is inspired by the Gallery's current exhibition "Police Society: Portraits of the English Country Gentleman and his Family" by the eighteenth-century painter Sir Joshua Reynolds. The loyalty is in honour of King George III and the new Parliament, and children will be asked to recreate an eighteenth-century courtly atmosphere with art, craft, music and dance. This involves dressing the part and taking along musical instruments (no percussion). Full details and tickets from the Secretaries' Office by post or telephone (ext 39). The age range is 7-14.

The Science Museum, Exhibition Road, SW7 (01-589 3456) has a "Discovery Room" open from December 19 to January 7 from 11.30-4.15 daily, except Sundays. Here children will find a selection of hands-on experiments and demonstrations: objects and apparatuses which can be touched and explored.

At the Tate Gallery, Millbank, SW1 (01-821 1313) "Looking Into Space" is a new exhibition to give an impression of depth in pictures is the theme. There's a Christmas trail of eight pictures to follow, available daily between December 7 and January 8, designed for the 8-14 age range. There are also guided Christmas tours for children on December 29 and 30, and January 3, 4 and 5, continuing the theme of space and depth.

These start at 11.30 from the Christmas tree in the Rotunda. And between December 14 and January 5 children can take part in the Christmas tree guessing game, with prizes for those who come closest to the number of postcards of paintings and sculptures on the tree.

Children of all ages, and accompanying adults, can enjoy the entertainment at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, W8 (01-602 0702). This is "Gina and the Giant's Christmas Dinner", the dramatization of a popular Maltese folk tale. Children will learn how Christmas is spent in Malta, join in singing Maltese folk songs and play a traditional street game with a chance to win Maltese sweetmeats. Sessions are in the Activities Room at 11.00, 2.00 and 3.30 on January 3-7, and at 2.30 and 3.45 on January 8. Admission is free and there's no need to book.

The Horniman Museum, London Road, Forest Hill, SE23 (01-699 1872). The museum's Leisure Club offers activities for children aged eight and upwards. Children can take part in museum-related arts and crafts activities, including paper-mache, weaving and painting, with two-hour sessions beginning at 10.30 and 1.30. These are on December 22, 23, 28, 29, 30 and 31 and on January 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Admission and materials are free.

The backdrop to some of the newly opened activity is "Meet the Artist: Holbein" in which the painter is reincarnated as seen at work on "The Ambassadors", 450 years after the event. As he paints he discusses the progress of the picture with his audience, and chats about topical matters such as Henry VIII's secret marriage to Anne Boleyn. Children are invited to ask questions and help out with some of the painter's technical problems.

Performances are at 2.30 on December 28, 29, 30 and January 3, 4, 5 and 6. Queue tickets will be issued 30 minutes



Liz Heron discovers a host of exhibitions and activities on a theme - Christmas past and Christmas present



make". "Prince Albert and His Family" is an illustrated talk on December 29 at 2.30, while on December 31 at 2.30 Percy Press 11 puts in an appearance to present his traditional Punch and Judy show. "More about Christmas Trees: songs, stories and things to make" is on January 3 at 2.30. No tickets are required.

Roman Britain is the theme of activities at the British Museum, Great Russell Street, WC1 (01-636 1555 ext 511), thanks to the recent opening of the new Roman Britain room, which contains major new discoveries from the Roman Foss, the Colchester and Hadrian's Wall. A "children's trail" will be available all through the holidays from the Front Hall Information Desk. On January 3, 4, 5 and 6 special talks for children will start at 2.30 in the Roman Britain room, followed by films at 3.30 in the lecture theatre.

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, NW3 (01-435 2643) is running a week-long winter school from January

December 12 to Friday January 6 (except December 24 and 25). This is a game, played twice a day, at 10.30-12.30 and 2.00-4.00 - which involves lighting each of the tree's candles by the completion of a worksheet.

Each of the worksheets is designed to help children discover the paintings and the beauties of Kenwood House, through looking, drawing and writing. Children can work alone, in pairs or in groups, and may attend as often as they wish. There's also a worksheet for very young children (ages three-six) who can work with accompanying adults. Completed "Christmas Tree Cards" are eligible for prizes. No bookings are necessary, except for the ease of school groups.

At the Museum of London, London Wall, EC2 (01-600 3699) there is a series of workshops, talks and walkabouts for children aged 10 and upwards (adults are welcome too). On January 3 at 12.00 there's "Digging Up the City", an illustrated talk on discover-

ing and recording hidden archaeological sites; at 2.30 "Bugs, Bones and Botany" is the subject of a workshop. "Straight Out of the Earth" is a workshop which will give children the chance to inspect some recent finds of Roman and Medieval objects.

This is at 12.00 on January 4, while at 2.15 there's a gallery talk "Digging in the City" and at 3.00 an "Underground Walkabout" setting out to explore the Roman Fort Gate and the Crypt of St. Mary-le-Bow Church. "Saving London from the Bulldozer" is the workshop at 12.00 on January 5, followed by a talk on London's early harbour at 2.15, and at 3.15 an "Underground Walkabout" exploring the Roman Fort Gate and the Crypt of the Guildhall.

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MEDIA

With that the giant grabbed
Thin King and Mr Builder and
threw them in the moat.

Phonic thinking

Teacher David McKay was consultant on the first series of "Radio Thin King". Here he explains the thinking behind this innovative series for slow readers

By Spring '84 there will be 40 Radio Thin King programmes to help disperse the frequent solemnity and boredom of the pedagogical atmosphere into which slow readers are reluctantly thrust.

The main characters in *Radio Thin King* first appeared in *Springboard* in 1975. There was Alfie Bet the presenter and the three inhabitants of Word Castle, Thin King, Mr Builder and Bookworm. From his very first script Derek Farmer was able to make them carry a teaching-learning load that was easy on listeners because they had little in common with a utilitarian, five-finger-exercise approach to reading.

Like Mr Builder, a bluff, fatherly character, a practical "leave it to me" bloke, given to calling everyone "lad" and able to do a Beowulf with alternative and rhyming interjections such as "whistling wheelbarrows" or

"thorny thistles" or "snails tails!" Then there's Bookworm who munches notices and who has a compendium of weaknesses remarkably similar to some 8 to 10-year-old boys.

Thin King - distant cousin by spelling of that other King, Noddy - has just the merest inherited flavour of musical-hall in his vowels but he was roughed up by teachers and the producer turned him into a lanky Scot.

Besides those at the centre of events there's a host of others who come and go with the ebb and flow of Derek Farmer's story line. Together these zanies take on the serious job of providing children with experience of phonic relationships but with a touch of burlesque and a rich sense of the ridiculous that succeeds because Derek Farmer knows what makes children laugh.

For each story Derek Farmer has two starting points. First there are the main characters and the mythology that surrounds them, and second a list of words which exemplify an aspect of

English spelling patterns. These are printed along with notes for teachers and parents on the inside cover of each of the recently published *Thin King* stories. In *Story 2*, "Runaway Whale", for example, there is a list of words enough to daunt many a writer.

Story 4, *A rhyme in time*, concentrates on rhyming words: "Bookworm, what's up lad? Are you not well?" said Mr Builder. "Well! Tell! Bell! Scill! Dnoohill!" moaned Bookworm.

"Send for Dr Proctor," said Mr B. Doctor Proctor came right away. "Say ninety nine!" she said to Bookworm.

"He can't count to that many," said Thin King. "Try ten instead." "Alright," said Doctor Proctor. "Say ten."

"Ten! Men! Pen! Pen! Oww!" groaned Bookworm.

In due course everyone gets the "rhymes" and this could happen to RTK listeners and readers as well, as they tackle follow-up work.

Last year Rezwan was one of a

group of 9 and 10-year-old children at Henry Cavendish School in Balham, London, who started listening to RTK. Six were overcoming weaknesses in their reading and four, including Rezwan, were learning English as well.

Rezwan liked the programmes for their jingles and sound effects, for the distinctive accents of its actors and for their mixture of drama, word games, quizzes and story readings. With all the group, interest and enjoyment were the way to understanding.

This year the group have all caught up sufficiently to work with the rest of the class and another group of children are getting themselves ready for a Radio Thin King session. When Mrs Hillhouse, their teacher, uses the series, her pupils work largely on their own, using the recorded cassette, the duplicated worksheets and the books, as instructed by Alfie Bet. Twice the tape is stopped by their teacher while she checks to make sure they have understood the work on blends and, later, that they know what to do at

quite time. At the end of the programme, they finish the book, each taking a turn to read aloud, while the others listen and read silently. Before they pack up, they each take two stories back to the classroom to re-read.

The work that RTK has inspired in second year remedial boys in a Kent school, is all round their small one-fall classroom. In this school too teachers and children find that Alfie Bet's reading, which has now been added to all the programmes, has enhanced their value. They know from experience that training children in phonics is not much use until the skill they acquire is applied to deriving meanings from a text.

Listen and Read: Radio Thin King is broadcast on Tuesday mornings on Radio 4 VHF at 11.40 to 11.55. The books read at the end of each programme are selected from *Thin King Stories*, *Whizz Bang Books* and *Bangers and Mash*, all published by Longman Group Ltd, and *Happy Families* published by Puffin/Kesrel.

True to the spirit?

Cartoons and animated films of books are favourites for children in the holidays. Carolyn O'Grady looks at some of this year's Christmas offerings on television



which, though shown in the tea-time slot, is aimed at adults as well as children. The intensity of the suffering involved is heightened further by Munch-like close-ups with screaming eyes. The result is a moving revelation of Eliot's faith in simple virtue which ultimately wins through.

In order to pare down a complex story, the film occasionally takes odd leaps forward which necessitate either a knowledge of the book or some very quick thinking on the part of the audience. This alone will make it difficult viewing for young children, who will want the gaps explained. But adults and older children will appreciate the intensity and truthfulness of the feelings expressed. One imagines that Eliot would have approved of this version.

Whether Grahame would have approved of Thames's *The Wind in the Willows* (December 27, 17.30, ITV) produced by Cosgrave Hall, is less certain. This production for younger children is very beautiful and absorbing and everything that is said and done in it, is said and done in the book. Its main failing probably stems from the technol-

que employed; it is acted out by animated models which are true to the original E.H. Shepherd illustrations but unfortunately lack any vitality.

In the case of slow-moving, solemn Badger or sleepy, grumpy Rat, the slow, limited movements are appropriate, but an inactive Toad is like a flat snuff: not the same thing at all. Toad is the hyperactive centre of Grahame's book, a large, long-lived character befriended by the others and forgiven his all-too-obvious faults largely because of his zest for life. The film fails to convey this zest. But for all that, it has enormous charm and beauty and the characterization of the other animals is thoughtfully done.

An intriguing curiosity to be broadcast by Channel 4 Christmas Day is *Skywhales* (15.10). A 15-minute animated film by Animatoo City, it is about a race of green, long-nosed creatures who live on a mass of vegetation suspended in the sky from where they sail forth to hunt sky-whales. The film is extraordinarily strong and convincingly conceived, but suffers from an ending which is too clever by half. See it, though, and judge for yourself.

Comedy

VIDEO
The Comic Spirit
The New Shakespeare Company
Video Workshop
Format: VHS or Betamax, £20.00
Available from CFI Vision Sales Department, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 8TN (tel. 02907 4111).

Difficult to think of a more enlightened or courageous example of arts sponsorship than Lloyds Bank's funding of the New Shakespeare Company's A Level Shakespeare Video Workshops. They get their name across to a select group of 500-to-be students, while providing a whole new experience of Shakespeare and plugging a gap that is left by even the best classroom teaching.

Originally produced on stage at the Roundhouse in London, the productions now reach a wider audience through video. The first *The Tattered Mind*, an exploration of Shakespeare's tragedy, has been around for some time. More recently it has been joined by *The Comic Spirit*, which analyses scenes from half a dozen of the comedies to find out "what has made people laugh over the ages".

The style of the hour-long video production is very similar to the live performance style developed by the New Shakespeare Company. Writer David Whitworth acts as a presenter, just as he did on stage, linking together scenes which are simply but adequately performed by a small company. It matters very little that the same actors crop up in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and then minutes later and with only slight change of costume in an extract from *Twelfth Night*: everyone is very clear that it is a workshop and not a full performance.

Although it refers to most of the commonly-used examinations texts, *The Comic Spirit*, like *The Tattered Mind*, is designed neither as a substitute for seeing the complete plays in live performance nor as an alternative to verbal classroom teaching. Rather it is intended to supply something of the background knowledge and appreciation which A level examiners are always looking for. The aim is that students should be able to see *The Tattered Mind*, *As You Like It* or whichever play they are studying as contributing to a whole - as just one play written by a man who wrote 36 others and as part of the continuum of comedy running from the Ancient Greeks to *Fawlty Towers*.

Hugh David

Badger and Mole (as washermen), Toad and Rat

